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P O E M S

PREVIOUS ISSUES

OLD-WORLD IDYLLS. Eleventh Thousand.

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE. Eighth Thousand.

THE BALLAD OF BEAU BROCADE. Twelfth
Thousand.

PROVERBS IN PORCELAIN. Seventh Thousand.

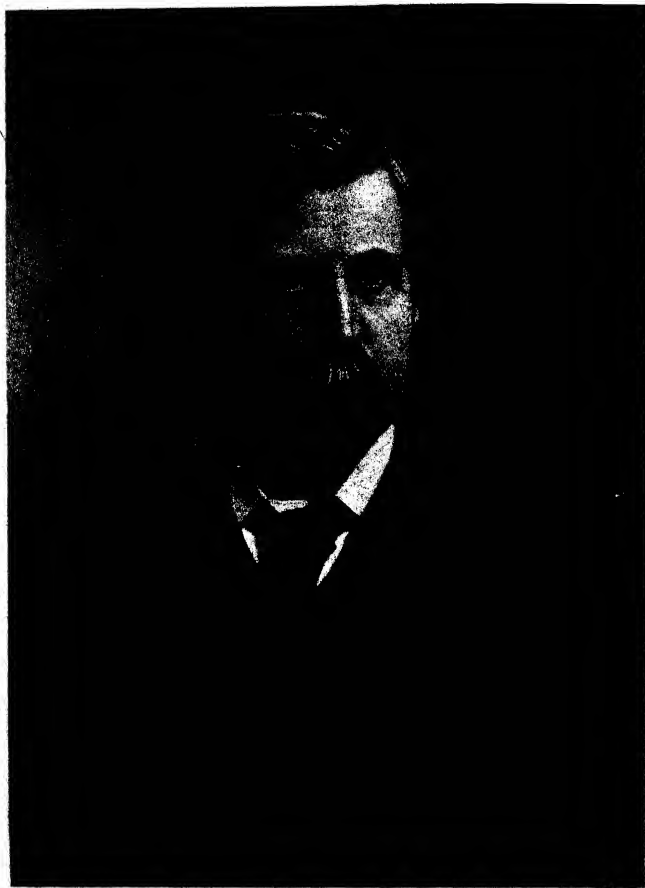
THE STORY OF ROSINA. Tenth Thousand.

*POEMS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS. 2 vols.

* Three hundred and fifty copies of this were printed as a
strictly limited Edition for the English market

LONDON :

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & CO. LTD.



J. Russell & Sons, photo.

Vol. 1, No. 1, 1881

Austin Dobson

COLLECTED
P O E M S

BY
AUSTIN DOBSON

WITH A PORTRAIT

Majores majora sonent

SECOND EDITION

LONDON
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & CO. LTD
PATERNOSTER HOUSE, CHARING CROSS ROAD

1897

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PREFACE

THIS volume comprises all the verses written by me during the last thirty years which—in my opinion—seem worthy of preservation. Even with these it is possible that I have occasionally been more indulgent to a personal memory than attentive to a critical instinct. But I am fully conscious of the limitations of the result attained, and the motto on my title-page is sincere. Let me here complete it:—

*“mibi parva locuto
Sufficit in vestras sæpe redire manus.”*

*To you I sing, whom towns immure,
And bonds of toil hold fast and sure ;—
To you across whose aching sight
Come woodlands bathed in April light,
● And dreams of pastime premature.*

*And you, O Sad, who still endure
Some wound that only Time can cure,—
To you, in watches of the night,—
To you I sing !*

*But most to you with eyelids pure,
Scarce witting yet of love or lure ;—
To you, with bird-like glances bright,
Half-paused to speak, half-poised in flight ;—
O English Girl, divine, demure,
To you I sing !*

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* * * Those pieces marked with a star [*] were first reprinted or restored in *Poems on Several Occasions*, 2 vols., 1895; those marked with a dagger [†], with one exception, have not previously appeared in a volume of collected verses.

OLD-WORLD IDYLLS

A DEAD LETTER

“ À cœur blessé—l'ombre et le silence.”

—H. DE BALZAC.

I

I DREW it from its china tomb ;--
It came out feebly scented
With some thin ghost of past perfume
That dust and days had lent it.

An old, old letter,—folded still !
To read with due composure,
I sought the sun-lit window-sill,
Above the gray enclosure,

That glimmering in the sultry haze,
Faint-flowered, dimly shaded,
Slumbered like Goldsmith's Madam Blaize,
Bedizened and brocaded.

A queer old place ! You'd surely say
Some tea-board garden-maker
Had planned it in Dutch William's day
To please some florist Quaker,

OLD-WORLD IDYLLS

So trim it was. The yew-trees still,
With pious care perverted,
Grew in the same grim shapes ; and still
The lipless dolphin spurted ;

Still in his wonted state abode
The broken-nosed Apollo ;
And still the cypress-arbour showed
The same umbrageous hollow.

Only,—as fresh young Beauty gleams
From coffee-coloured laces,—
So peeped from its old-fashioned dreams
The fresher modern traces ;

For idle mallet, hoop, and ball
Upon the lawn were lying ;
A magazine, a tumbled shawl,
Round which the swifts were flying ;

And, tossed beside the Guelder rose,
A heap of rainbow knitting,
Where, blinking in her pleased repose,
A Persian cat was sitting.

“ A place to love in,—live,—for aye,
If we too, like Tithonus,
Could find some God to stretch the gray,
Scant life the Fates have thrown us ;

A DEAD LETTER

“ But now by steam we run our race,
With buttoned heart and pocket ;
Our Love's a gilded, surplus grace,—
Just like an empty locket !

“ ‘ The time is out of joint.’ Who will
May strive to make it better ;
For me, this warm old window-sill,
And this old dusty letter.”

II

“ Dear *John* (the letter ran), it can't, can't be,
For Father's gone to *Chorley Fair* with *Sam*,
And Mother's storing Apples,—*Prue* and Me
Up to our Elbows making Damson Jam :
But we shall meet before a Week is gone,—
‘ 'Tis a long Lane that has no turning,’ *John* !

“ Only till Sunday next, and then you'll wait
Behind the White-Thorn, by the broken Stile—
We can go round and catch them at the Gate,
All to Ourselves, for nearly one long Mile ;
Dear *Prue* won't look, and Father he'll go on,
And *Sam*'s two Eyes are all for *Cissy*, *John* !

“ *John*, she's so smart,—with every Ribbon new,
Flame-coloured Sack, and Crimson Padesoy :
As proud as proud ; and has the Vapours too,
Just like My Lady ;—calls poor *Sam* a Boy,
And vows no Sweet-heart's worth the Thinking-on
Till he's past Thirty . . . I know better, *John* !

OLD-WORLD IDYLLS

“My Dear, I don’t think that I thought of much
Before we knew each other, I and you ;
And now, why, *John*, your least, least Finger-touch,
Gives me enough to think a Summer through.
See, for I send you Something ! There, ’tis gone !
Look in this corner,—mind you find it, *John* !”

III

This was the matter of the note,—
A long-forgot deposit,
Dropped in an Indian dragon’s throat,
Deep in a fragrant closet,

Piled with a dapper Dresden world,—
Beaux, beauties, prayers, and poses,—
Bonzes with squat legs undercurled,
And great jars filled with roses.

Ah, heart that wrote ! Ah, lips that kissed !
You had no thought or presage
Into what keeping you dismissed
Your simple old-world message !

A reverent one. Though we to-day
Distrust beliefs and powers,
The artless, ageless things you say
Are fresh as May’s own flowers,

A DEAD LETTER

Starring some pure primeval spring,
Ere Gold had grown despotic,—
Ere Life was yet a selfish thing,
Or Love a mere exotic !

I need not search too much to find
Whose lot it was to send it,
That feel upon me yet the kind,
Soft hand of her who penned it ;

And see, through two score years of smoke,
In by-gone, quaint apparel,
Shine from yon time-black Norway oak
The face of Patience Caryl,—

The pale, smooth forehead, silver-tressed ;
The gray gown, primly flowered ;
The spotless, stately coif whose crest
Like Hector's horse-plume towered ;

And still the sweet half-solemn look
Where some past thought was clinging,
As when one shuts a serious book
To hear the thrushes singing.

I kneel to you ! Of those you were,
Whose kind old hearts grow mellow,—
Whose fair old faces grow more fair
As Point and Flanders yellow ;

OLD-WORLD IDYLLS

Whom some old store of garnered grief,
Their placid temples shading,
Crowns like a wreath of autumn leaf
With tender tints of fading.

Peace to your soul! You died unwed—
Despite this loving letter.
And what of John? The less that's said
Of John, I think, the better.

A GENTLEMAN OF THE OLD SCHOOL

A GENTLEMAN OF THE OLD SCHOOL

HE lived in that past Georgian day,
When men were less inclined to say
That "Time is Gold," and overlay
With toil their pleasure ;
He held some land, and dwelt thereon,—
Where, I forget,—the house is gone ;
His Christian name, I think, was John,—
His surname, Leisure.

Reynolds has painted him,—a face
Filled with a fine, old-fashioned grace,
Fresh-coloured, frank, with ne'er a trace
Of trouble shaded ;
The eyes are blue, the hair is drest
In plainest way,—one hand is prest
Deep in a flapped canary vest,
With buds brocaded.

He wears a brown old Brunswick coat,
With silver buttons,—round his throat,
A soft cravat ;—in all you note
An elder fashion,—

OLD-WORLD IDYLLS

A strangeness, which, to us who shine
In shapely hats,—whose coats combine
All harmonies of hue and line,—
Inspires compassion.

He lived so long ago, you see !
Men were untravelled then, but we,
Like Ariel, post o'er land and sea
 With careless parting ;
He found it quite enough for him
To smoke his pipe in "garden trim,"
And watch, about the fish tank's brim,
 The swallows darting.

He liked the well-wheel's creaking tongue,—
He liked the thrush that stopped and sung,—
He liked the drone of flies among
 His netted peaches ;
He liked to watch the sunlight fall
Athwart his ivied orchard wall ;
Or pause to catch the cuckoo's call
 Beyond the beeches. •

His were the times of Paint and Patch,
And yet no Ranelagh could match
The sober doves that round his thatch
 Spread tails and sidled ;
He liked their ruffling, puffed content,—
For him their drowsy wheelings meant
More than a Mall of Beaux that bent,
 Or Belles that bridled.

A GENTLEMAN OF THE OLD SCHOOL

Not that, in truth, when life began,
He shunned the flutter of the fan ;
He too had maybe "pinked his man"
In Beauty's quarrel ;
But now his "fervent youth" had flown
Where lost things go ; and he was grown
As staid and slow-paced as his own
Old hunter, Sorrel.

Yet still he loved the chase, and held
That no composer's score excelled
The merry horn, when Sweetlip swelled
Its jovial riot ;
But most his measured words of praise
Caressed the angler's easy ways,—
His idly meditative days,—
His rustic diet.

Not that his "meditating" rose
Beyond a sunny summer doze ;
He never troubled his repose
With fruitless prying ;
But held, as law for high and low,
What God withholds no man can know,
And smiled away inquiry so,
Without replying.

We read—alas, how much we read !
The jumbled strifes of creed and creed
With endless controversies feed
Our groaning tables ;

OLD-WORLD IDYLLS

His books—and they sufficed him—were
Cotton's "Montaigne," "The Grave" of Blair,
A "Walton"—much the worse for wear—
And "Æsop's Fables."

One more,—“The Bible.” Not that he
Had searched its page as deep as we;
No sophistries could make him see
 Its slender credit;
It may be that he could not count,
The sires and sons to Jesse's fount,—
He liked the “Sermon on the Mount,”—
And more, he read it.

Once he had loved, but failed to wed,
A red-cheeked lass who long was dead;
His ways were far too slow, he said,
 To quite forget her;
And still when time had turned him gray,
The earliest hawthorn buds in May
Would find his lingering feet astray,
 Where first he met her.

“*In Cælo Quies*” heads the stone
On Leisure's grave,—now little known,
A tangle of wild-rose has grown
 So thick across it;
The “Benefactions” still declare
He left the clerk an elbow-chair,
And “12 Pence Yearly to Prepare
 A Christmas Posset.”

A GENTLEMAN OF THE OLD SCHOOL

Lie softly, Leisure ! Doubtless you
With too serene a conscience drew
Your easy breath, and slumbered through
The gravest issue ;
But we, to whom our age allows
Scarce space to wipe our weary brows,
Look down upon your narrow house,
Old friend, and miss you !

OLD-WORLD IDYLLS

A GENTLEWOMAN OF THE OLD SCHOOL

SHE lived in Georgian era too. .
Most women then, if bards be true,
Succumbed to Routs and Cards, or grew
Devout and acid.
But hers was neither fate. She came
Of good west-country folk, whose fame
Has faded now. For us her name
Is "Madam Placid."

Patience or Prudence,—what you will,
Some prefix faintly fragrant still
As those old musky scents that fill .
Our grandams' pillows ;
And for her youthful portrait take
Some long-waist child of Hudson's make,
Stiffly at ease beside a lake
With swans and willows.

I keep her later semblance placed
Beside my desk,—'tis lawned and laced,
In shadowy sanguine stipple traced
By Bartolozzi ;

A GENTLEWOMAN OF THE OLD SCHOOL

A placid face, in which surprise
Is seldom seen, but yet there lies
Some vestige of the laughing eyes
Of arch Piozzi.

For her e'en Time grew debonair.
He, finding cheeks unclaimed of care,
With late-delayed faint roses there,
And lingering dimples,
Had spared to touch the fair old face,
And only kissed with Vauxhall grace
The soft white hand that stroked her lace,
Or smoothed her wimples.

So left her beautiful. Her age
Was comely as her youth was sage,
And yet she once had been the rage ;—
It hath been hinted,
Indeed, affirmed by one or two,
Some spark at Bath (as sparks will do)
Inscribed a song to "Lovely Prue,"
Which Urban printed.

I know she thought ; I know she felt ;
Perchance could sum, I doubt she spelt ;
She knew as little of the Celt
As of the Saxon ;
I know she played and sang, for yet
We keep the tumble-down spinet
To which she quavered ballads set
By Arne or Jackson.

OLD-WORLD IDYLLS

Her tastes were not refined as ours ;
She liked plain food and homely flowers,
Refused to paint, kept early hours,
 Went clad demurely ;
Her art was sampler-work design,
Fireworks for her were "vastly fine,"
Her luxury was elder-wine,—
 She loved that "purely."

She was renowned, traditions say,
For June conserves, for curds and whey,
For finest tea (she called it "tay"),
 And ratafia ;
She knew, for sprains, what bands to choose,
Could tell the sovereign wash to use
For freckles, and was learned in brews
 As erst Medea.

Yet studied little. She would read,
On Sundays, "Pearson on the Creed,"
Though, as I think, she could not heed
 His text profoundly ;
Seeing she chose for her retreat
The warm west-looking window-seat,
Where, if you chanced to raise your feet,
 You slumbered soundly.

'This, 'twixt ourselves. The dear old dame,
In truth, was not so much to blame ;
The excellent divine I name
 Is scarcely stirring ;

A GENTLEWOMAN OF THE OLD SCHOOL

Her plain-song piety preferred
Pure life to precept. If she erred,
She knew her faults. Her softest word
Was for the erring.

If she had loved, or if she kept
Some ancient memory green, or wept
Over the shoulder-knot that slept
Within her cuff-box,
I know not. Only this I know,
At sixty-five she'd still her beau,
A lean French exile, lame and slow,
With monstrous snuff-box.

Younger than she, well-born and bred.
She'd found him in St. Giles', half dead
Of teaching French for nightly bed
And daily dinners ;
Starving, in fact, 'twixt want and pride ;
And so, henceforth, you always spied
His rusty " pigeon-wings " beside
Her Mechlin pinners.

He worshipped her, you may suppose.
She gained him pupils, gave him clothes,
Delighted in his dry bon-mots
And cackling laughter ;
And when, at last, the long duet
Of conversation and picquet
Ceased with her death, of sheer regret
He died soon after.

OLD-WORLD IDYLLS

Dear Madam Placid ! Others knew
Your worth as well as he, and threw
Their flowers upon your coffin too,

I take for granted.

Their loves are lost ; but still we see
Your kind and gracious memory

Bloom yearly with the almond tree

The Frenchman planted.

THE BALLAD OF "BEAU BROCADE"

THE BALLAD OF "BEAU BROCADE"

"Hark! I hear the sound of coaches!"

—BEGGAR'S OPERA.

SEVENTEEN hundred and thirty-nine :—
That was the date of this tale of mine.

First great GEORGE was buried and gone ;
GEORGE the Second was plodding on.

LONDON then, as the "Guides" aver,
Shared its glories with *Westminster* ;

And people of rank, to correct their "tone,"
Went out of town to *Marybone*.

Those were the days of the War with *Spain*,
PORTO-BELLO would soon be ta'en ;

WHITEFIELD preached to the colliers grim,
Bishops in lawn sleeves preached at him ;

WALPOLE talked of "a man and his price" ;
Nobody's virtue was over-nice :—

OLD-WORLD IDYLLS ^c

Those, in fine, were the brave days when
Coaches were stopped by . . . *Highwaymen!*

And of all the knights of the gentle trade
Nobody bolder than "BEAU BROCADE."

This they knew on the whole way down ;
Best,—maybe,—at the "*Oak and Crown.*"

(For timorous cits on their pilgrimage
Would "club" for a "Guard" to ride the stage ;

And the Guard that rode on more than one
Was the Host of this hostel's sister's son.)

Open we here on a March day fine,
Under the oak with the hanging sign.

There was Barber DICK with his basin by ;
Cobbler JOE with the patch on his eye ;

Portly product of Beef and Beer,
JOHN the host, he was standing near.

Straining and creaking, with wheels awry,
Lumbering came the "*Plymouth Fly*";—

Lumbering up from *Bagshot Heath*,
Guard in the basket armed to the teeth ;

Passengers heavily armed inside ;
Not the less surely the coach had been tried !

THE BALLAD OF "BEAU BROCADE"

Tried!—but a couple of miles away,
By a well-dressed man!—in the open day!

Tried successfully, never a doubt,—
Pockets of passengers all turned out!

Cloak-bags rifled, and cushions ripped,—
Even an Ensign's wallet stripped!

Even a Methodist hosier's wife
Offered the choice of her Money or Life!

Highwayman's manners no less polite,
Hoped that their coppers (returned) were right;—

Sorry to find the company poor,
Hoped next time they'd travel with more;—

Plucked them all at his ease, in short:—
Such was the "*Plymouth Fly's*" report.

Sympathy! horror! and wonderment!
"Catch the Villain!" (But Nobody went.)

Hosier's wife led into the Bar;
(That's where the best strong waters are!)

Followed the tale of the hundred-and-one
Things that Somebody ought to have done.

Ensign (of BRAGG'S) made a terrible clangour:
But for the Ladies had drawn his hanger!

OLD-WORLD IDYLLS .

Robber, of course, was "BEAU BROCADE";
Out-spoke DOLLY the Chambermaid.

Devonshire DOLLY, plump and red,
Spoke from the gallery overhead;—

Spoke it out boldly, staring hard:—
"Why didn't you shoot then, GEORGE the
Guard?"

Spoke it out bolder, seeing him mute:—
"GEORGE the Guard, why didn't you shoot?"

Portly JOHN grew pale and red,
(JOHN was afraid of her, people said;)

Gasped that "DOLLY was surely cracked,"
(JOHN was afraid of her—that's a fact!)

GEORGE the Guard grew red and pale,
Slowly finished his quart of ale:—

"Shoot? Why—Rabbit him!—didn't he shoot?"
Muttered—"The Baggage was far too 'cute!"

"Shoot? Why he'd flashed the pan in his eye!"
Muttered—"She'd pay for it by and by!"
Further than this made no reply.

Nor could a further reply be made,
For GEORGE was in league with "BEAU BROCADE"!

And JOHN the Host, in his wakefullest state,
Was not—on the whole—immaculate.

THE BALLAD OF "BEAU BROCADE"

But nobody's virtue was over-nice
When WALPOLE talked of "a man and his price";

And wherever Purity found abode,
'Twas certainly *not* on a posting road.

II

"Forty" followed to "Thirty-nine."
Glorious days of the *Hanover* line!

Princes were born, and drums were banged;
Now and then batches of Highwaymen hanged.

"Glorious news!"—from the *Spanish Main*;
PORTO-BELLO at last was ta'en.

"Glorious news!"—for the liquor trade;
Nobody dreamed of "BEAU BROCADE."

People were thinking of *Spanish Crowns*;
Money was coming from seaport towns!

Nobody dreamed of "BEAU BROCADE,"
(Only DOLLY the Chambermaid!)

Blessings on VERNON! Fill up the cans;
Money was coming in "*Flys*" and "*Vans*."

Possibly JOHN the Host had heard;
Also, certainly, GEORGE the Guard.

OLD-WORLD IDYLLS

And DOLLY had possibly tidings, too,
That made her rise from her bed anew,

Plump as ever, but stern of eye,
With a fixed intention to warn the "*Fly*."

Lingering only at JOHN his door,
Just to make sure of a jerky snore ;

Saddling the gray mare, *Dumpling Star* ;
Fetching the pistol out of the bar ;

(The old horse-pistol that, they say,
Came from the battle of *Malplaquet* ;)

Loading with powder that maids would use,
Even in "Forty," to clear the flues ;

And a couple of silver buttons, the Squire
Gave her, away in *Devonshire*.

These she wadded—for want of better—
With the B—SH—P of L—ND—N's "Pastoral
Letter" ;

Looked to the flint, and hung the whole,
Ready to use, at her pocket-hole.

Thus equipped and accoutred, DOLLY
Clattered away to "*Exciseman's Folly*" ;—

Such was the name of a ruined abode,
Just on the edge of the *London* road.

THE BALLAD OF "BEAU BROCADE"

Thence she thought she might safely try,
As soon as she saw it, to warn the "*Fly*."

But, as chance fell out, her rein she drew,
As the BEAU came cantering into the view.

By the light of the moon she could see him drest
In his famous gold-sprigged tambour vest ;

And under his silver-gray surtout,
The laced, historical coat of blue,

That he wore when he went to *London-Spaw*,
And robbed Sir MUNGO MUCKLETHRAW.

Out-spoke DOLLY the Chambermaid,
(Trembling a little, but not afraid,)
"Stand and Deliver, O 'BEAU BROCADE' !"

But the BEAU rode nearer, and would not speak,
For he saw by the moonlight a rosy cheek ;

And a spavined mare with a rusty hide ;
And a girl with her hand at her pocket-side.

So never a word he spoke as yet,
For he thought 'twas a freak of MEG or BET ;—
A freak of the "*Rose*" or the "*Rummer*" set.

Out-spoke DOLLY the Chambermaid,
(Tremulous now, and sore afraid,)
"Stand and Deliver, O 'BEAU BROCADE' !"—

OLD-WORLD IDYLLS

Firing then, out of sheer alarm,
Hit the BEAU in the bridle-arm.

Button the first went none knows where,
But it carried away his *solitaire*;

Button the second a circuit made,
Glanced in under the shoulder-blade ;—
Down from the saddle fell “BEAU BROCADE” !

Down from the saddle and never stirred !—
DOLLY grew white as a *Windsor* curd.

Slipped not less from the mare, and bound
Strips of her kirtle about his wound.

Then, lest his Worship should rise and flee, ‘
Fettered his ankles—tenderly.

Jumped on his chestnut, BET the fleet
(Called after BET of *Portugal Street*) ;

Came like the wind to the old Inn-door ;—
Roused fat JOHN from a three-fold snore ;—

Vowed she’d ‘peach if he misbehaved . . .
Briefly, the “*Plymouth Fly*” was saved !

Staines and *Windsor* were all on fire :—
DOLLY was wed to a *Yorkshire* squire ;
Went to Town at the K—G’s desire !

But whether His M—J—STY saw her or not,
HOGARTH jotted her down on the spot ;

THE BALLAD OF "BEAU BROCADE"

And something of DOLLY one still may trace
In the fresh contours of his "*Milkmaid's*" face.

GEORGE the Guard fled over the sea :
JOHN had a fit—of perplexity ;

Turned King's evidence, sad to state ;—
But JOHN was never immaculate.

As for the BEAU, he was duly tried,
When his wound was healed, at *Whitsuntide* ;

Served—for a day—as the last of "sights,"
To the world of *St. James's-Street* and "*White's*,"

Went on his way to TYBURN TREE,
With a pomp befitting his high degree.

Every privilege rank confers :—
Bouquet of pinks at *St. Sepulchre's* ;

Flagon of ale at *Holborn Bar* ;
Friends (in mourning) to follow his Car—
("t" is omitted where HEROES are !)

Every one knows the speech he made ;
Swore that he "rather admired the Jade !" —

Waved to the crowd with his gold-laced hat :
Talked to the Chaplain after that ;

Turned to the Topsman undismayed . . .
This was the finish of "BEAU BROCADE" !

OLD-WORLD IDYLLS

*And this is the Ballad that seemed to hide
In the leaves of a dusty "LONDONER'S GUIDE" ;*

*"Humbly Inscrib'd (with curls and tails)
By the Author to FREDERICK, Prince of WALES :-*

*"Published by FRANCIS and OLIVER PINE ;
Ludgate-Hill, at the Blackmoor Sign.
Seventeen-Hundred-and-Thirty-Nine."*

c

UNE MARQUISE

UNE MARQUISE

A RHYMED MONOLOGUE IN THE LOUVRE

“ *Belle Marquise, vos beaux yeux me font mourir d’amour.* ” *

—MOLIÈRE.

I

• AS you sit there at your ease,
O Marquise !
And the men flock round your knees
Thick as bees,
Mute at every word you utter,
Servants to your least frill-flutter,
“ *Belle Marquise !* ”—
As you sit there growing prouder,
And your ringed hands glance and go,
And your fan’s *frou-frou* sounds louder,
And your “ *beaux yeux* ” flash and glow ;—
Ah, you used them on the Painter,
As you know,
• For the *Sieur Larose* spoke fainter,
Bowing low,
Thanked Madame and Heaven for Mercy
That each sitter was not Circe,
Or at least he told you so ;—

OLD-WORLD IDYLLS

Growing proud, I say, and prouder
To the crowd that come and go,
Dainty Deity of Powder,
Fickle Queen of Fop and Beau,
As you sit where lustres strike you,
Sure to please,
Do we love you most, or like you,
“ *Belle Marquise ?* ”

*

II

You are fair ; O yes, we know it
Well, Marquise :
For he swore it, your last poet,
On his knees ;
And he called all heaven to witness
Of his ballad and its fitness,
“ *Belle Marquise !* ”—
You were everything in *ère*
(With exception of *sévère*),—
You were *cruelle* and *rebelle*,
With the rest of rhymes as well ;
You were “ *Reine*,” and “ *Mère d'Amour* ” ;
You were “ *Vénus à Cythère* ” ;
“ *Sappho mise en Pompadour*,”
And “ *Minerve en Parabère* ” ;
You had every grace of heaven
In your most angelic face,
With the nameless finer leaven
Lent of blood and courtly race ;
And he added, too, in duty,
Ninon's wit and Boufflers' beauty ;

UNE MARQUISE

And La Vallière's *yeux veloutés*
Followed these ;
And you liked it, when he said it
(On his knees),
And you kept it, and you read it,
“ *Belle Marquise !* ”

III

Yet with us your toilet graces
Fail to please,
And the last of your last faces,
And your *mise* ;
For we hold you just as real,
“ *Belle Marquise !* ”
As your *Bergers* and *Bergères*,
Iles d'Amour and *Batelières* ;
As your *parcs*, and your Versailles,
Gardens, grottoes, and *rocailles* ;
As your Naiads and your trees ;—
Just as near the old ideal
Calm and ease,
As the Venus there, by Coustou,
That a fan would make quite flighty,
Is to her the gods were used to,—
Is to grand Greek Aphroditè,
Sprung from seas.
You are just a porcelain trifle,
“ *Belle Marquise !* ”
Just a thing of puffs and patches,

OLD-WORLD IDYLLS

Made for madrigals and catches,
Not for heart-wounds, but for scratches,
O Marquise !

Just a pinky porcelain trifle,
“ *Belle Marquise !* ”

Wrought in rarest *rose-Dubarry*,
Quick at verbal point and parry,
Clever, doubtless ;—but to marry,
No, Marquise !

IV

For your Cupid, you have clipped him,
Rouged and patched him, nipped and snipped him,
And with *chapeau-bras* equipped him,
“ *Belle Marquise !* ”

Just to arm you through your wife-time,
And the languors of your life-time,
“ *Belle Marquise !* ”

Say, to trim your toilet tapers,
Or,—to twist your hair in papers,
Or,—to wean you from the vapours ;—

As for these,
You are worth the love they give you,
Till a fairer face outlive you,

Or a younger grace shall please ;
Till the coming of the crows' feet,
And the backward turn of beaux' feet,
“ *Belle Marquise !* ”—

Till your frothed-out life's commotion
Settles down to Ennui's ocean,
Or a dainty sham devotion,

“ *Belle Marquise !* ”

UNE MARQUISE

V

No : we neither like nor love you,
 “ *Belle Marquise !* ”
Lesser lights we place above you,—
 Milder merits better please.
We have passed from *Philosophe*-dom
 Into plainer modern days,—
Grown contented in our oafdom,
 Giving grace not all the praise ;
And, *en partant*, *Arsinoé*,—
 Without malice whatsoever,—
We shall counsel to our Chloë
 To be rather good than clever ;
● For we find it hard to smother
 Just one little thought, Marquise !
Wittier perhaps than any other,—
You were neither Wife nor Mother,
 “ *Belle Marquise !* ”

OLD-WORLD IDYLLS ,

THE STORY OF ROSINA

AN INCIDENT IN THE LIFE OF FRANÇOIS
BOUCHER

“ *On ne badine pas avec l'amour.* ”

THE scene, a wood. A shepherd tip-toe
creeping,
Carries a basket, whence a billet peeps,
To lay beside a silk-clad Oread sleeping
Under an urn ; yet not so sound she sleeps
But that she plainly sees his graceful act ;
“ He thinks she thinks he thinks she sleeps,” in
fact.

One hardly needs the “*Peint par François
Boucher.*”

All the sham life comes back again,—one sees
Alcôves, Ruelles, the Lever, and the Coucher, “

Patches and Ruffles, *Roués* and *Marquises* ;
The little great, the infinite small thing
That ruled the hour when Louis Quinze was
king.

THE STORY OF ROSINA

For these were yet the days of halcyon weather,—
A “Martin’s summer,” when the nation swam,
Aimless and easy as a wayward feather,
Down the full tide of jest and epigram;—
A careless time, when France’s bluest blood
Beat to the tune of “After us the Flood.”

Plain Roland still was placidly “inspecting,”
Not now Camille had stirred the Café Foy;
Marat was young, and Guillotin dissecting,
Corday unborn, and Lamballe in Savoie;
No *faubourg* yet had heard the Tocsin ring:—
This was the summer—when Grasshoppers sing.

And far afield were sun-baked savage creatures,
Female and male, that tilled the earth, and
 wrung
Want from the soil;—lean things with livid
 features,
Shape of bent man, and voice that never sung:
These were the Ants, for yet to Jacques Bon-
 homme
Tumbrils were not, nor any sound of drum.

But Boucher was a Grasshopper, and painted,—
Rose-water Raphael,—*en couleur de rose*,
The crowned Caprice, whose sceptre, nowise
 sainted,
Swayed the light realm of ballets and bon-
 mots;—
Ruled the dim boudoir’s *demi-jour*, or drove
Pink-ribboned flocks through some pink-flowered
 grove.

OLD-WORLD IDYLLS

A laughing Dame, who sailed a laughing cargo
Of flippant loves along the *Fleuve du Tendre* ;
Whose greatest grace was *jupes à la Camargo*,
Whose gentlest merit *gentiment se rendre* ;
Queen of the rouge-cheeked Hours, whose foot-
steps fell
To Rameau's notes, in dances by Gardel ;—

Her Boucher served, till Nature's self betraying,
As Wordsworth sings, the heart that loved her
not,
Made of his work a land of languid Maying,
Filled with false gods and muses misbegot ;—
A Versailles Eden of cosmetic youth,
Wherein most things went naked, save the Truth.

Once, only once,—perhaps the last night's revels
Palled in the after-taste,—our Boucher sighed
For that first beauty, falsely named the Devil's,
Young-lipped, unlessoned, joyous, and clear-
eyed ;
Flung down his palette like a weary man,
And sauntered slowly through the Rue Sainte-
Anne.

Wherefore, we know not ; but, at times, far nearer
Things common come, and lineaments half-seen
Grow in a moment magically clearer ;—
Perhaps, as he walked, the grass he called “too
green”
Rose and rebuked him, or the earth “ill-lighted”
Silently smote him with the charms he slighted.

THE STORY OF ROSINA

But, as he walked, he tired of god and goddess,
Nymphs that deny, and shepherds that appeal ;
Stale seemed the trick of kerchief and of bodice,
Folds that confess, and flutters that reveal ;
Then as he grew more sad and disenchanted,
Forthwith he spied the very thing he wanted.

So, in the Louvre, the passer-by might spy some
Arch-looking head, with half-evasive air,
Start from behind the fruitage of Van Huysum,
Grape-bunch and melon, nectarine and pear :—
Here 'twas no Venus of Batavian city,
But a French girl, young, *piquante*, bright, and
pretty.

Graceful she was, as some slim marsh-flower shaken
Among the sallows, in the breezy Spring ;
Blithe as the first blithe song of birds that waken,
Fresh as a fresh young pear-tree blossoming ;
Black was her hair as any blackbird's feather ;
Just for her mouth, two rose-buds grew together.

Sloes were her eyes ; but her soft cheeks were
peaches,

Hued like an Autumn pippin, where the red
Seems to have burned right through the skin, and
reaches

E'en to the core ; and if you spoke, it spread
Up till the blush had vanquished all the brown,
And, like two birds, the sudden lids dropped
down.

OLD-WORLD IDYLLS

As Boucher smiled, the bright black eyes ceased
dancing ;

As Boucher spoke, the dainty red eclipse
Filled all the face from cheek to brow, enhancing

Half a shy smile that dawned around the lips.
Then a shrill mother rose upon the view ;

“ *Cerises, M'sieu ? Rosine, dépêchez-vous !* ”

Deep in the fruit her hands Rosina buries,

Soon in the scale the ruby bunches lay,
The Painter, watching the suspended cherries,

Never had seen such little fingers play ;—
As for the arm, no Hebe's could be rounder ;
Low in his heart a whisper said “ I've found
her.”

“ Woo first the mother, if you'd win the daughter ! ”

Boucher was charmed, and turned to *Madame*
Mère,

Almost with tears of suppliance besought her

Leave to immortalize a face so fair ;
Praised and cajoled so craftily that straightway
Voici Rosina,—standing at his gateway.

Shy at the first, in time Rosina's laughter

Rang through the studio as the girlish face
Peeped from some painter's travesty, or after

Showed like an Omphale in lion's case ;
Gay as a thrush, that from the morning dew
Pipes to the light its clear “ *Réveillez-vous.* ”

THE STORY OF ROSINA

Just a mere child with sudden ebullitions,
Flashes of fun, and little bursts of song,
Petulant pains, and fleeting pale contritions,
Mute little moods of misery and wrong ;
Only a child, of Nature's rarest making,
Wistful and sweet,—and with a heart for breaking!

Day after day the little loving creature
Came and returned ; and still the Painter
felt,
Day after day, the old theatric Nature
Fade from his sight, and like a shadow melt
Paniers and Powder, Pastoral and Scene,
Killed by the simple beauty of Rosine.

As for the girl, she turned to her new being,—
Came, as a bird that hears its fellow call ;
Blessed, as the blind that blesses God for seeing ;
Grew, as the flower on which the sun-rays
fall ;
Loved if you will ; she never named it so :
Love comes unseen,—we only see it go.

There is a figure among Boucher's sketches,
Slim,—a child-face, the eyes as black as beads,
Head set askance, and hand that shyly stretches
Flowers to the passer, with a look that pleads.
This was no other than Rosina surely ;—
None Boucher knew could else have looked so
purely.

OLD-WORLD IDYLLS

But forth her Story, for I will not tarry :

Whether he loved the little "nut-brown maid" ;
If, of a truth, he counted this to carry

Straight to the end, or just the whim obeyed,
Nothing we know, but only that before
More had been done, a finger tapped the door.

Opened Rosina to the unknown comer.

'Twas a young girl—"une pauvre fille," she
said,

"They had been growing poorer all the summer ;

Father was lame, and mother lately dead ;
Bread was so dear, and,—oh ! but want was
bitter,

Would Monsieur pay to have her for a sitter ?

Men called her pretty." Boucher looked a minute :

Yes, she was pretty ; and her face beside
Shamed her poor clothing by a something in
it,—

Grace, and a presence hard to be denied ;

This was no common offer it was certain ;—

"*Allez*, Rosina ! sit behind the curtain."

Meanwhile the Painter, with a mixed emotion,

Drew and re-drew his ill-disguised Marquise,
Passed in due time from praises to devotion ;

Last when his sitter left him on his knees,
Rose in a maze of passion and surprise,—
Rose, and beheld Rosina's saddened eyes.

THE STORY OF ROSINA

Thrice-happy France, whose facile sons inherit
Still in the old traditionary way,
Power to enjoy—with yet a rarer merit,
Power to forget! Our Boucher rose, I say,
With hand still prest to heart, with pulses throbbing,
And blankly stared at poor Rosina sobbing.

“This was no model, *M’sieu*, but a lady.”
Boucher was silent, for he knew it true.
“*Est-ce que vous l’aimez?*” Never answer made he!
Ah, for the old love fighting with the new!
“*Est-ce que vous l’aimez?*” sobbed Rosina’s sorrow.
“*Bon!*” murmured Boucher; “she will come
• to-morrow.”

How like a Hunter thou, O Time, dost harry
Us, thine oppressed, and pleased with the chase,
Sparest to strike thy sorely-running quarry,
Following not less with unrelenting face.
Time, if Love hunt, and Sorrow hunt, with thee,
Woe to the Fawn! There is no way to flee.

Woe to Rosina! By To-morrow stricken,
Swift from her life the sun of gold declined.
Nothing remained but those gray shades that
thicken,
Cloud and the cold,—the loneliness—the wind.
Only a little by the door she lingers,—
Waits, with wrung lip and interwoven fingers.

OLD-WORLD IDYLLS

No, not a sign. Already with the Painter
Grace and the nymphs began recovered reign ;
Truth was no more, and Nature, waxing fainter,
Paled to the old sick Artifice again.
Seeing Rosina going out to die,
How should he know what Fame had passed him
by ?

Going to die ! For who shall waste in sadness,
Shorn of the sun, the very warmth and light,
Miss the green welcome of the sweet earth's
gladness,
Lose the round life that only Love makes
bright :
There is no succour if these things are taken.
None but Death loves the lips by Love forsaken.

So, in a little, when those Two had parted,—
Tired of himself, and weary as before,
Boucher remembering, sick and sorry-hearted,
Stayed for a moment by Rosina's door.
“ Ah, the poor child ! ” the neighbours cry of her,
“ *Morte, M'sieu, morte ! On dit,—des peines de
cœur !* ”

Just for a second, say, the tidings shocked him ;
Say, in his eye a sudden tear-drop shone,—
Just for a second, a dull feeling mocked him
With a vague sense of something priceless gone ;
Then,—for at best 'twas but the empty type,
The husk of man with which the days were ripe,—

THE STORY OF ROSINA

Then, he forgot her. But, for you that slew her,
You, her own sister, that with airy ease,
Just for a moment's fancy could undo her,
Pass on your way. A little while, Marquise,
Be the sky silent, be the sea serene ;
A pleasant passage—à *Sainte Guillotine* !

As for Rosina,—for the quiet sleeper,
Whether stone hides her, or the happy grass,
If the sun quickens, if the dews beweeep her,
Laid in the Madeleine or Montparnasse,
Nothing we know,—but that her heart is cold,
Poor beating heart ! And so the Story's told.

PROVERBS IN PORCELAIN

“Rien en relief.”

PROLOGUE

ASSUME *that we are friends. Assume*
A common taste for old costume,—
Old pictures,—books. Then dream us sit-
ting—
Us two—in some soft-lighted room.

Outside, the wind;—the “ways are mire.”
We, with our faces toward the fire,
Finished the feast not full but fitting,
Watch the light-leaping flames aspire.

Silent at first, in time we glow;
Discuss “eclectics,” high and low;
Inspect engravings, ’twixt us passing
The fancies of DETROY, MOREAU;

“Reveils” and “Couchers,” “Balls” and
“Fêtes”;
Anon we glide to “corks” and plates,
Grow eloquent on glaze and classing,
And half-pathetic over “states.”

PROVERBS IN PORCELAIN_c

*Then I produce my Prize, in truth ;—
Six groups in SÈVRES, fresh as Youth,
And rare as Love. You pause, you wonder,
(Pretend to doubt the marks, forsooth !)*

*And so we fall to why and how
The fragile figures smile and bow ;
Divine, at length, the fable under . . .
Thus grew the “Scenes” that follow now.*

THE BALLAD À-LA-MODE

THE BALLAD À-LA-MODE

“Tout vient à point à qui sait attendre.”

SCENE.—*A Boudoir Louis-Quinze, painted with
Cupids shooting at Butterflies.*

THE COUNTESS. THE BARON (*her cousin and
suitor*).

THE COUNTESS (*looking up from her work*).

BARON, you doze.

THE BARON (*closing his book*).

I, Madame? No.
I wait your order—Stay or Go.

THE COUNTESS.

Which means, I think, that Go or Stay
Affects you nothing, either way.

THE BARON.

Excuse me,—by your favour graced,
My inclinations are effaced.

PROVERBS IN PORCELAIN

THE COUNTESS.

Or much the same. How keen you grow !
You must be reading MARIVAUX.

THE BARON.

Nay,—'twas a song of SAINTE-AULAIRE.

THE COUNTESS.

Then read me one. We've time to spare :
If I can catch the clock-face there,
'Tis barely eight.

THE BARON.

What shall it be,—
A tale of woe, or perfidy ?

THE COUNTESS.

Not woes, I beg. I doubt your woes :
But perfidy, of course, one knows.

THE BARON (*reads*).

“ ‘ *Ah, Phillis ! cruel Phillis !
(I heard a Shepherd say,)
You hold me with your Eyes, and yet
You bid me—Go my Way !* ’

THE BALLAD À-LA-MODE

“ *Ah, Colin ! foolish Colin !
(The Maiden answered so,)
If that be All, the Ill is small,
I close them—You may go !* ”

“ *But when her Eyes she opened,
(Although the Sun it shone,)
She found the Shepherd had not stirred—
‘ Because the Light was gone !’* ”

“ *Oh, Cupid ! wanton Cupid !
’Twas ever thus your Way :
When Maids would bid you ply your Wings,
You find Excuse to stay !* ”

THE COUNTESS.

Famous ! He earned whate’er he got :—
But there’s some sequel, is there not ?

THE BARON (*turning the page*).

I think not.—No. Unless ’tis this :
My fate is far more hard than his ;—
In fact, *your* Eyes—

THE COUNTESS.

Now, that’s a breach !
Your bond is—not to make a speech.
And we must start—so call JUSTINE.
I know exactly what you mean !—
Give me your arm—

PROVERBS IN PORCELAIN

THE BARON.

If, in return,
Countess, I could your hand but earn!

THE COUNTESS.

I thought as much. This comes, you see,
Of sentiment, and Arcady,
Where vows are hung on every tree . . .

THE BARON (*offering his arm, with a low bow*).

And no one dreams—of PERFIDY.

THE METAMORPHOSIS

THE METAMORPHOSIS

"On s'enrichit quand on dort."

SCENE.—*A high stone Seat in an Alley of clipped Lime-trees.*

THE ABBÉ TIRILI.

MONSIEUR L'ÉTOILE.

THE ABBÉ (*writing*).

"*T**HIS shepherdess Dorine adored—*
What rhyme is next? *Implored?—ignored?*
Poured?—soared?—afford? That facile Dunce,
L'ÉTOILE, would cap the line at once.
'Twill come in time. Meanwhile, suppose
We take a meditative doze.

(Sleeps. By-and-by his paper falls.)

M. L'ÉTOILE (*approaching from the back*).

Some one before me. What! 'tis you,
Monsieur the Scholar? Sleeping too!
(Picks up the fluttering paper.)
More "*Tales*," of course One can't refuse
To chase so fugitive a Muse!

PROVERBS IN PORCELAIN

Verses are public, too, that fly

"Cum privilegio"—Zephyri!

(*Reads.*)

"CLITANDER AND DORINE." Insane!

He fancies he's a LA FONTAINE!

"In early Days, the Gods, we find,

Paid casual Visits to Mankind;—

At least, authentic Records say so

In Publius Ovidius Naso."

(Three names for one. This passes all.)

'Tis "furiously" classical!)

"No doubt their Purpose oft would be

Some 'Nodus dignus Vindice' ;

'On dit,' not less, these earthward Tours

Were mainly Matters of Amours.

And Woe to him whose luckless Flame

Impeded that Olympic Game ;

Ere he could say an 'Ave' o'er,

They changed him—like a Louis-d'or."

(*"Aves,"* and current coinage! O!—

O shade of NICOLAS BOILEAU!)

"Bird, Beast, or River he became :

With Women it was much the same.

In Ovid Case to Case succeeds ;

But Names the Reader never reads."

(That is, Monsieur the Abbé feels

His quantities are out at heels!)

"Suffices that, for this our Tale,

There dwelt in a Thessalian Vale,

Of Tales like this the frequent Scene,

A Shepherdess, by name Dorine.

Trim Waist, ripe Lips, bright Eyes, had she ;—

In short,—the whole Artillery.

THE METAMORPHOSIS

*Her Beauty made some local Stir ;—
Men marked it. So did Jupiter.
This Shepherdess Dorine adored. . . .”
Implored, ignored, and soared, and poured—
(He’s scrawled them here!) We’ll sum in brief
His fable on his second leaf.*

(Writes.)

There, they shall know who ’twas that wrote :—
“L’ÉTOILE’S *is but a mock-bird’s note.*” [Exit.

THE ABBÉ (*waking*).

Implored’s the word, I think. But where,—
Where is my paper? Ah! ’tis there!
Eh! what?

(Reads.)

THE METAMORPHOSIS

(not in Ovid).

*“The Shepherdess Dorine adored
The Shepherd-Boy Clitander ;
But Jove himself, Olympus’ Lord,
The Shepherdess Dorine adored.
Our Abbé’s Aid the Pair Implored ;—
And changed to Goose and Gander ;
The Shepherdess Dorine adored
The Shepherd-Boy Clitander !”*

L’ÉTOILE,—by all the Muses !

Peste !

He’s off, post-haste, to tell the rest.
No matter. Laugh, Sir Dunce, to-day ;
Next time ’twill be *my* turn to play.

PROVERBS IN PORCELAIN

THE SONG OUT OF SEASON

“ *Point de culte sans mystère.* ”

SCENE.—*A Corridor in a Château, with Busts and Venice chandeliers.*

MONSIEUR L'ÉTOILE. TWO VOICES.

M. L'ÉTOILE (*carrying a Rose*).

THIS is the place. MUTINE said here.
“Through the Mancini room, and near
The fifth Venetian chandelier. . . .”
The fifth?—She knew there were but four;—
Still, here's the *busto* of the Moor.

(*Humming.*)

Tra-la, tra-la! If BIJOU wake,
He'll bark, no doubt, and spoil my shake!
I'll tap, I think. One can't mistake;
This surely is the door.

(*Sings softly.*)

“ *When Jove, the Skies' Director,
First saw you sleep of yore,
He cried aloud for Nectar,*

THE SONG OUT OF SEASON

*'The Nectar quickly pour,—
The Nectar, Hebe, pour !' "*

(No sound. I'll tap once more.)

(Sings again.)

*"Then came the Sire Apollo,
He passed you where you lay;
'Come, Dian, rise and follow
The dappled Hart to slay,—
The rapid Hart to slay.' "*

(A rustling within.)

(Coquette! She heard before.)

(Sings again.)

*"And urchin Cupid after
Beside the Pillow curled,
He whispered you with Laughter,
'Awake and witch the World,—
O Venus, witch the World !' "*

(Now comes the last. 'Tis scarcely worse,
I think, than Monsieur l'ABBÉ's verse.)

*"So waken, waken, waken,
O You, whom we adore;
Where Gods can be mistaken,
Mere Mortals must be more,—
Poor Mortals must be more !"*

(That merits an encore.)

*"So waken, waken, waken !
O YOU, whom we adore !"*

PROVERBS IN PORCELAIN

(*An energetic VOICE.*)

'Tis thou, ANTOINE? Ah, Addle-pate!
Ah, Thief of Valet, always late!
Have I not told thee half-past eight
A thousand times!

(*Great agitation.*)

But wait,—but wait,—

M. L'ÉTOILE (*stupefied*).

Just Skies! What hideous roar!—
What lungs! The infamous Soubrette!
This is a turn I sha'n't forget:—
To make me sing my *chansonnette* •
Before old JOURDAIN'S door!

(*Retiring slowly.*)

And yet, and yet,—it can't be she.
They prompted her. Who can it be?

(*A second VOICE.*)

IT WAS THE ABBÉ TI—RI—LI!

(*In a mocking falsetto.*)

“Where Gods can be mistaken,
Mere Poets must be more,—
BAD POETS *must be more.*”

THE CAP THAT FITS

THE CAP THAT FITS

“ Qui sème épines n’aille déchaux.”

SCENE.—*A Salon with blue and white Panels.
Outside, Persons pass and re-pass upon a
Terrace.*

HORTENSE. ARMANDE. MONSIEUR LOYAL.

HORTENSE (*behind her fan*).

NOT young, I think.

ARMANDE (*raising her eye-glass*).

And faded, too!—
Quite faded! Monsieur, what say you?

M. LOYAL.

Nay,—I defer to you. In truth,
To me she seems all grace and youth.

PROVERBS IN PORCELAIN

HORTENSE.

Graceful? You think it? What, with hands
That hang like this (*with a gesture*).

ARMANDE.

And how she stands!

M. LOYAL.

Nay,—I am wrong again. I thought
Her air delightfully untaught!

HORTENSE.

But you amuse me—

M. LOYAL.

Still her dress,—
Her dress at least, you *must* confess—

ARMANDE.

Is odious simply! JACOTOT
Did not supply that lace, I know;
And where, I ask, has mortal seen
A hat unfeathered!

HORTENSE.

Edged with green!!

THE CAP THAT FITS

M. LOYAL.

The words remind me. Let me say
A Fable that I heard to-day.
Have I permission ?

BOTH (*with enthusiasm*).

Monsieur, pray !

M. LOYAL.

“ Myrtilla (*lest a Scandal rise*
The Lady's Name I thus disguise),
Dying of Ennui, once decided—
o *Much on Resource herself she prided—*
To choose a Hat. Forthwith she flies
On that momentous Enterprise.
Whether to Petit or Legros,
I know not : only this I know ;—
Head-dresses then, of any Fashion,
Bore Names of Quality or Passion.
Myrtilla tried them, almost all :
‘ Prudence,’ she felt, was somewhat small ;
‘ Retirement ’ seemed the Eyes to hide ;
‘ Content,’ at once, she cast aside.
‘ Simplicity,’—’twas out of Place ;
‘ Devotion,’ for an older Face ;
Briefly, Selection smaller grew,
‘ Vexations ! ’ odious !—none would do !
Then, on a sudden, she espied
One that she thought she had not tried :

PROVERBS IN PORCELAIN

*Becoming, rather,—‘ edged with green,’—
Roses in yellow, Thorns between.
‘Quick! Bring me that!’ ’Tis brought. ‘Complete,
Divine, Enchanting, Tasteful, Neat,’
In all the Tones. ‘ And this you call ——?’
“ILL-NATURE,” Madame. It fits all.’”*

‘ HORTENSE.

A thousand thanks! So naïvely turned!

ARMANDE.

So useful too . . . to those concerned!
’Tis yours?

M. LOYAL.

Ah no,—some cynic wit’s;
And called (I think)—
(Placing his hat upon his breast),
“The Cap that Fits.”

THE SECRETS OF THE HEART

THE SECRETS OF THE HEART

"Le cœur mène où il va."

SCENE. *A Chalet covered with Honeysuckle.*

NINETTE.

NINON.

NINETTE.
THIS way—

NINON.

No, this way—

NINETTE.

This way, then.

(They enter the Chalet.)
You are as changing, Child,—as Men.

NINON.

But are they? Is it true, I mean?
Who said it?

NINETTE.

Sister SÉRAPHINE.

She was so pious and so good,
With such sad eyes beneath her hood,

PROVERBS IN PORCELAIN

And such poor little feet,—all bare !
Her name was EUGÉNIE LA FÈRE.
She used to tell us,—moonlight nights,—
When I was at the Carmelites.

NINON.

Ah, then it must be right. And yet,
Suppose for once—suppose, NINETTE—

NINETTE.

But what ?

NINON.

Suppose it were not so ?
Suppose there *were* true men, you know !

NINETTE.

And then ?

NINON.

Why, if that could occur,
What kind of man should you prefer ?

NINETTE.

What looks, you mean ?

NINON.

Looks, voice and all.

THE SECRETS OF THE HEART

NINETTE.

Well, as to that, he must be tall,
Or say, not "tall,"—of middle size ;
And next, he must have laughing eyes,
And a hook-nose,—with, underneath,
O ! what a row of sparkling teeth !

NINON (*touching her cheek suspiciously*).
Has he a scar on this side ?

NINETTE.

Hush !

Some one is coming. No ; a thrush :
I see it swinging there.

NINON.

Go on.

NINETTE.

Then he must fence, (ah, look, 'tis gone !)
And dance like Monseigneur, and sing
"Love was a Shepherd" :—everything
That men do. Tell me yours, NINON.

*
NINON.

Shall I ? Then mine has black, black hair . .
I mean he *should* have ; then an air
Half sad, half noble ; features thin ;
A little *royale* on the chin ;
And such a pale, high brow. And then,
He is a prince of gentlemen ;—

PROVERBS IN PORCELAIN

He, too, can ride and fence and write
Sonnets and madrigals, yet fight
No worse for that—

NINETTE.

I know your man.

NINON.

And I know yours. But you'll not tell,—
Swear it!

NINETTE.

I swear upon this fan,—
My Grandmother's!

NINON.

And I, I swear
On this old turquoise *reliquaire*,—
My great—*great* Grandmother's!!—
(*After a pause.*)

NINETTE!

I feel *so* sad.

NINETTE.

I too! But why?

NINON.

Alas, I know not!

NINETTE (*with a sigh*).

Nor do I.

“GOOD-NIGHT, BABETTE!”

“GOOD-NIGHT, BABETTE!”

“*Si vieillesse pouvait!—*”

SCENE.—*A small neat Room. In a high Voltaire Chair sits a white-haired old Gentleman.*

MONSIEUR VIEUXBOIS.

BABETTE.

M. VIEUXBOIS (*turning querulously*).

DAY of my life! Where *can* she get?
BABETTE! I say! BABETTE!—BABETTE!

BABETTE (*entering hurriedly*).

Coming, M'sieu'! If M'sieu' speaks
So loud, he won't be well for weeks!

M. VIEUXBOIS.

Where have you been?

BABETTE.

Why, M'sieu' knows:—
April! . . . Ville d'Avray! . . . Ma'am'selle ROSE!

PROVERBS IN PORCELAIN

M. VIEUXBOIS.

Ah ! I am old,—and I forget.
Was the place growing green, BABETTE ?

BABETTE.

But of a greenness !—yes, M'sieu' !
And then the sky so blue !—so blue !
And when I dropped my *immortelle* .
How the birds sang !

(Lifting her apron to her eyes.)

This poor Ma'am'selle !

M. VIEUXBOIS.

You're a good girl, BABETTE, but she,—
She was an Angel, verily.
Sometimes I think I see her yet
Stand smiling by the cabinet ;
And once, I know, she peeped and laughed
Betwixt the curtains . . .

Where's the draught ?

(She gives him a cup.)

Now I shall sleep, I think, BABETTE ;—
Sing me your Norman *chansonnette*.

BABETTE (*sings*).

“ *Once at the Angelus*
(Ere I was dead),

“GOOD-NIGHT, BABETTE!”

*Angels all glorious
Came to my Bed;
Angels in blue and white
Crowned on the Head.”*

M. VIEUXBOIS (*drowsily*).

“She was an Angel” . . . “Once she laughed” . . .
What, was I dreaming?

Where’s the draught?

BABETTE (*showing the empty cup*).

The draught, M’sieu’?

M. VIEUXBOIS.

How I forget!
I am so old! But sing, BABETTE!

BABETTE (*sings*).

*“One was the Friend I left
Stark in the Snow;
One was the Wife that died
Long,—long ago;
One was the Love I lost . . .
How could she know?”*

M. VIEUXBOIS (*murmuring*).

Ah, PAUL! . . . old PAUL! . . . EULALIE too!
And ROSE . . . And O! “the sky so blue!”

PROVERBS IN PORCELAIN

BABETTE (*sings*).^a

*“ One had my Mother’s eyes,
Wistful and mild ;*

*One had my Father’s face ;
One was a Child :*

*All of them bent to me,—
Bent down and smiled ! ”*

(He is asleep !)

M. VIEUXBOIS (*almost inaudibly*).

“ How I forget ! ”

“ I am so old ! ” . . . “ Good-night, BABETTE ! ”

EPILOGUE

EPILOGUE

HEIGHO! *how chill the evenings get!*
Good-night, NINON!—good-night, NINETTE!
Your little Play is played and finished;—
Go back, then, to your Cabinet!

LOYAL, L'ÉTOILE! *no more to-day!*
Alas! they heed not what we say:
They smile with ardour undiminished;
But we,—we are not always gay!

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

“ Sans peser,—sans rester ”

THE DRAMA OF THE DOCTOR'S WINDOW

IN THREE ACTS, WITH A PROLOGUE

*"A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus,
And his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth."*

—MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM.

PROLOGUE

"WELL, I must wait!" The Doctor's
room,
Where I used this expression,
Were the severe official gloom
Attached to that profession;
Rendered severer by a bald
And skinless Gladiator,
Whose raw robustness first appalled
The entering spectator.

No one would call "The Lancet" gay,—
Few could avoid confessing
That Jones, "On Muscular Decay,"
Is—as a rule—depressing :

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

So, leaving both, to change the scene,
I turned toward the shutter,
And peered out vacantly between
A water-butt and gutter.

Below, the Doctor's garden lay,
If thus imagination
May dignify a square of clay
Unused to vegetation,
Filled with a dismal-looking swing—
That brought to mind a gallows—
An empty kennel, mouldering,
And two dyspeptic aloes.

No sparrow chirped, no daisy sprung,
About the place deserted ;
Only across the swing-board hung
A battered doll, inverted,
Which sadly seemed to disconcert
The vagrant cat that scanned it,
Sniffed doubtfully around the skirt,
But failed to understand it.

A dreary spot ! And yet, I own,
Half hoping that, perchance, it
Might, in some unknown way, atone
For Jones and for " The Lancet,"
I watched ; and by especial grace,
Within this stage contracted,
Saw presently before my face
A classic story acted.

DRAMA OF THE DOCTOR'S WINDOW

Ah, World of ours, are you so gray
And weary, World, of spinning,
That you repeat the tales to-day
You told at the beginning?
For lo! the same old myths that made
The early "stage successes,"
Still "hold the boards," and still are played,
"With new effects and dresses."

Small, lonely "three-pair-backs" behold,
To-day, Alcestis dying;
To-day, in farthest Polar cold,
Ulysses' bones are lying;
Still in one's morning "Times" one reads
How fell an Indian Hector;
Still clubs discuss Achilles' steeds,
Briseis' next protector;—

Still Menelaus brings, we see,
His oft-remanded case on;
Still somewhere sad Hypsipyle
Bewails a faithless Jason;
And here, the Doctor's sill beside,
Do I not now discover
A Thisbe, whom the walls divide
From Pyramus, her lover?

ACT THE FIRST.

Act I. began. Some noise had scared
The cat, that like an arrow
Shot up the wall and disappeared;
And then, across the narrow,

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

Unweeded path, a small dark thing,
Hid by a garden-bonnet,
Passed wearily towards the swing,
Paused, turned, and climbed upon it.

A child of five, with eyes that were
At least a decade older,
A mournful mouth, and tangled hair
Flung careless round her shoulder,
Dressed in a stiff ill-fitting frock,
Whose black, uncomely rigour
Sardonically seemed to mock
The plaintive, slender figure.

What was it? Something in the dress
That told the girl unmothered;
Or was it that the merciless
Black garb of mourning smothered
Life and all light:—but rocking so,
In the dull garden-corner,
The lonely swinger seemed to grow
More piteous and forlorn.

Then, as I looked, across the wall
Of "next-door's" garden, that is—
To speak correctly—through its tall
Surmounting fence of lattice,
Peeped a boy's face, with curling hair,
Ripe lips, half drawn asunder,
And round, bright eyes, that wore a stare
Of frankest childish wonder.

DRAMA OF THE DOCTOR'S WINDOW

Rounder they grew by slow degrees,
Until the swinger, swerving,
Made, all at once, alive to these
Intentest orbs observing,
Gave just one brief, half-uttered cry,
And,—as with gathered kirtle,
Nymphs fly from Pan's head suddenly
Thrust through the budding myrtle,—

Fled in dismay. A moment's space,
Their eyes looked almost tragic ;
Then, when they caught my watching face,
Vanished as if by magic ;
And, like some sombre thing beguiled
To strange, unwonted laughter,
The gloomy garden, having smiled,
Became the gloomier after.

ACT THE SECOND.

Yes : they were gone, the stage was bare,—
Blank as before ; and therefore,
Sinking within the patient's chair,
Half vexed, I knew not wherefore,
I dozed ; till, startled by some call,
A glance sufficed to show me,
The boy again above the wall,
The girl erect below me.

The boy, it seemed, to add a force
To words found unavailing,
Had pushed a striped and spotted horse
Half through the blistered paling,

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

Where now it stuck, stiff-legged and straight,
While he, in exultation,
Chattered some half-articulate
Excited explanation.

Meanwhile, the girl, with upturned face,
Stood motionless, and listened ;
The ill-cut frock had gained a grace,
The pale hair almost glistened ;
The figure looked alert and bright,
Buoyant as though some power
Had lifted it, as rain at night
Uplifts a drooping flower.

The eyes had lost their listless way,—
The old life, tired and faded,
Had slipped down with the doll that lay
Before her feet, degraded ;
She only, yearning upward, found
In those bright eyes above her
The ghost of some enchanted ground,
Where even Nurse would love her.

Ah, tyrant Time ! you hold the book,
We, sick and sad, begin it ;
You close it fast, if we but look*
Pleased for a meagre minute ;
You closed it now, for, out of sight,
Some warning finger beckoned ;
Exeunt both to left and right ;—
Thus ended Act the Second.

DRAMA OF THE DOCTOR'S WINDOW

ACT THE THIRD.

Or so it proved. For while I still
Believed them gone for ever,
Half raised above the window sill,
I saw the lattice quiver ;
And lo, once more appeared the head,
Flushed, while the round mouth pouted ;
“ Give Tom a kiss,” the red lips said,
In style the most undoubted.

The girl came back without a thought ;
Dear Muse of Mayfair, pardon,
If more restraint had not been taught
In this neglected garden ;
For these your code was all too stiff,
So, seeing none dissented,
Their unfeigned faces met as if
Manners were not invented.

Then on the scene,—by happy fate,
When lip from lip had parted,
And, therefore, just two seconds late,—
A sharp-faced nurse-maid darted ;
Swooped on the boy, as swoops a kite
Upon a rover chicken,
And bore him sourly off, despite
His well-directed kicking.

The girl stood silent, with a look
Too subtle to unravel,
Then, with a sudden gesture took
The torn doll from the gravel ;

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

Hid the whole face, with one caress,
Under the garden-bonnet,
And, passing in, I saw her press
Kiss after kiss upon it.

Exeunt omnes. End of play.
It made the dull room brighter,
The Gladiator almost gay,
And e'en "The Lancet" lighter.

AN AUTUMN IDYLL

AN AUTUMN IDYLL

"Sweet Themes! runne softly, till I end my song."

—SPENSER.

LAWRENCE.

FRANK.

JACK.

LAWRENCE.

HERE, where the beech-nuts drop among the
grasses,
Push the boat in, and throw the rope ashore.
Jack, hand me out the claret and the glasses;
Here let us sit. We landed here before.

FRANK.

Jack's undecided. Say, *formose puer*,
Bent in a dream above the "water wan,"
Shall we row higher, for the reeds are fewer,
There by the pollards, where you see the swan?

JACK.

Hist! That's a pike. Look—nose against the river,
Gaunt as a wolf,—the sly old privateer!
Enter a gudgeon. Snap,—a gulp, a shiver;—
Exit the gudgeon. Let us anchor here.

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

FRANK (*in the grass*).

Jove, what a day! Black Care upon the crupper
Nods at his post, and slumbers in the sun ;
Half of Theocritus, with a touch of Tupper,
Churns in my head. The frenzy has begun !

LAWRENCE.

Sing to us then. Damoetas in a choker,
Much out of tune, will edify the rocks.

FRANK.

Sing you again. So musical a croaker
Surely will draw the fish upon the hooks.

JACK.

Sing while you may. The beard of manhood still is
Faint on your cheeks, but I, alas ! am old.
Doubtless you yet believe in Amaryllis ;—
Sing me of Her, whose name may not be told.

FRANK.

Listen, O Thames ! His budding beard is ripier,
Say—by a week. Well, Lawrence, shall we
sing ?

LAWRENCE.

Yes, if you will. But ere I play the piper,
Let him declare the prize he has to bring.

• AN AUTUMN IDYLL

JACK.

Here then, my Shepherds. Lo, to him accounted
First in the song, a Pipe I will impart ;—
This, my Belovèd, marvellously mounted,
Amber and foam,—a miracle of art.

LAWRENCE.

Lordly the gift. O Muse of many numbers,
Grant me a soft alliterative song !

FRANK.

Me too, O Muse ! And when the Umpire
slumbers,
Sting him with gnats a summer evening long.

LAWRENCE.

Not in a cot, begarlanded of spiders,
Not where the brook traditionally “purls,”—
No, in the Row, supreme among the riders,
Seek I the gem,—the paragon of girls.

FRANK.

Not in the waste of column and of coping,
Not in the sham and stucco of a square,—
No, on a June-lawn, to the water sloping,
Stands she I honour, beautifully fair.

VIGNETTES IN RHYME.

LAWRENCE.

Dark-haired is mine, with splendid tresses plaited
Back from the brows, imperially curled ;
Calm as a grand, far-looking Caryatid,
Holding the roof that covers in a world.

FRANK.

Dark-haired is mine, with breezy ripples swinging
Loose as a vine-branch blowing in the morn ;
Eyes like the morning, mouth for ever singing,
Blithe as a bird new risen from the corn.

LAWRENCE.

Best is the song with the music interwoven :
Mine's a musician,—musical at heart,—
Throbs to the gathered grieving of Beethoven,
Sways to the light coquetting of Mozart.

FRANK.

Best? You should hear mine trilling out a ballad,
Queen at a picnic, leader of the glees,
Not too divine to toss you up a salad,
Great in Sir Roger danced among the trees.

LAWRENCE.

Ah, when the thick night flares with dropping
torches,
Ah, when the crush-room empties of the swarm,
Pleasant the hand that, in the gusty porches,
Light as a snow-flake, settles on your arm.

AN AUTUMN IDYLL

FRANK.

Better the twilight and the cheery chatting,—
Better the dim, forgotten garden-seat,
Where one may lie, and watch the fingers tatting,
Lounging with Bran or Bevis at her feet.

LAWRENCE.

All worship mine. Her purity doth hedge her
Round with so delicate divinity, that men
Stained to the soul with money-bag and ledger,
Bend to the goddess, manifest again.

FRANK.

None worship mine. But some, I fancy, love her,—
Cynics to boot. I know the children run,
Seeing her come, for naught that I discover,
Save that she brings the summer and the sun.

LAWRENCE.

Mine is a Lady, beautiful and queenly,
Crowned with a sweet, continual control,
Grandly forbearing, lifting life serenely
E'en to her own nobility of soul.

FRANK.

Mine is a Woman, kindly beyond measure,
Fearless in praising, faltering in blame :
Simply devoted to other people's pleasure,—
Jack's sister Florence,—now you know her name.

VIGNETTES IN RHYME.

LAWRENCE.

"Jack's sister Florence!" Never, Francis, never.
Jack, do you hear? Why, it was she I meant.
She like the country! Ah, she's far too clever—

FRANK.

There you are wrong. I know her down in
Kent.

LAWRENCE.

You'll get a sunstroke, standing with your head
bare.
Sorry to differ. Jack,—the word's with you.

FRANK.

How is it, Umpire? Though the motto's thread-
bare,
"*Cælum, non animum*"—is, I take it, true.

JACK.

"*Souvent femme varie*," as a rule, is truer;
Flattered, I'm sure,—but both of you romance.
Happy to further suit of either wooer,
Merely observing—you haven't got a chance.

AN AUTUMN IDYLL

LAWRENCE.

Yes. But the Pipe—

FRANK.

The Pipe is what we care for,—

JACK.

Well, in this case, I scarcely need explain,
Judgment of mine were indiscreet, and therefore,—
Peace to you both. The Pipe I shall retain.

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

A GARDEN IDYLL

A LADY. .

A POET.

THE LADY.

SIR POET, ere you crossed the lawn
(If it was wrong to watch you, pardon),
Behind this weeping birch withdrawn,
I watched you saunter round the garden.
I saw you bend beside the phlox,
Pluck, as you passed, a sprig of myrtle, “
Review my well-ranged hollyhocks,
Smile at the fountain’s slender spurtle ;

You paused beneath the cherry-tree,
Where my marauder thrush was singing,
Peered at the bee-hives curiously,
And narrowly escaped a stinging ;
And then—you see I watched—you passed
Down the espalier walk that reaches
Out to the western wall, and last
Dropped on the seat before the peaches.

What was your thought ? You waited long.
Sublime or graceful,—grave,—satiric ?
A Morris Greek-and-Gothic song ?
A tender Tennysonian lyric ?

A GARDEN IDYLL

Tell me. That garden-seat shall be,
So long as speech renown disperses,
Illustrious as the spot where he—
The gifted Blank—composed his verses.

THE POET.

Madam,—whose uncensorious eye
Grows gracious over certain pages,
Wherein the Jester's maxims lie,
It may be, thicker than the Sage's—
I hear but to obey, and could
Mere wish of mine the pleasure do you,
Some verse as whimsical as Hood,—
As gay as Praed,—should answer to you.

But, though the common voice proclaims
Our only serious vocation
Confined to giving nothings names
And dreams a "local habitation";
Believe me there are tuneless days,
When neither marble, brass, nor vellum,
Would profit much by any lays
That haunt the poet's cerebellum.

More empty things, I fear, than rhymes,
More idle things than songs, absorb it;
The "finely-frenzied" eye, at times,
Reposes mildly in its orbit;
And—painful truth—at times, to him,
Whose jog-trot thought is nowise restive,
"A primrose by a river's brim"
Is absolutely unsuggestive.

VIGNETTES IN RHYME.

The fickle Muse! As ladies will,
She sometimes wearies of her wooer;
A goddess, yet a woman still,
She flies the more that we pursue her;
In short, with worst as well as best,
Five months in six, your hapless poet
Is just as prosy as the rest,
But cannot comfortably show it.

You thought, no doubt, the garden-scent
Brings back some brief-winged bright sensation
Of love that came and love that went,—
Some fragrance of a lost flirtation,
Born when the cuckoo changes song,
Dead ere the apple's red is on it,
That should have been an epic long,
Yet scarcely served to fill a sonnet.

Or else you thought,—the murmuring noon,
He turns it to a lyric sweeter,
With birds that gossip in the tune,
And windy bough-swing in the metre;
Or else the zigzag fruit-tree arms
Recall some dream of harp-prest bosoms,
Round singing mouths, and chanted charms,
And mediæval orchard blossoms,—

Quite *à la mode*. Alas for prose!—
My vagrant fancies only rambled
Back to the red-walled Rectory close,
Where first my graceless boyhood gamboled,

A GARDEN IDYLL

Climbed on the dial, teased the fish,
And chased the kitten round the beeches,
Till widening instincts made me wish
For certain slowly-ripening peaches.

Three peaches. Not the Graces three
Had more equality of beauty :
I would not look, yet went to see ;
I wrestled with Desire and Duty ;
I felt the pangs of those who feel
The Laws of Property beset them ;
The conflict made my reason reel,
And, half-abstractedly, I ate them ;—

Or Two of them. Forthwith Despair—
More keen that one of these was rotten—
Moved me to seek some forest lair
Where I might hide and dwell forgotten,
Attired in skins, by berries stained,
Absolved from brushes and ablution ;—
But, ere my sylvan haunt was gained,
Fate gave me up to execution.

I saw it all but now. The grin
That gnarled old Gardener Sandy's features ;
My father, scholar-like and thin,
Unroused, the tenderest of creatures ;
I saw—ah me—I saw again
My dear and deprecating mother ;
And then, remembering the cane,
Regretted—that *I'd left the Other.*

❖ VIGNETTES IN RHYME ❖

TU QUOQUE

AN IDYLL IN THE CONSERVATORY

“ — romprons-nous,
Ou ne romprons-nous pas ? ”
—LE DÉPIT AMOUREUX.

NELLIE.

IF I were you, when ladies at the play, sir,
Beckon and nod, a melodrama through,
I would not turn abstractedly away, sir,
If I were you !

FRANK.

If I were you, when persons I affected,
Wait for three hours to take me down to Kew,
I would, at least, pretend I recollected,
If I were you !

NELLIE.

If I were you, when ladies are so lavish,
Sir, as to keep me every waltz but two,
I would not dance with *odious* Miss M‘Tavish,
If I were you !

TU QUOQUE

FRANK.

If I were you, who vow you cannot suffer
Whiff of the best,—the mildest “honey-dew,”
I would not dance with smoke-consuming Puffer,
If I were you!

NELLIE.

If I were you, I would not, sir, be bitter,
• Even to write the “Cynical Review”;—

FRANK.

No, I should doubtless find flirtation fitter,
If I were you!

NELLIE.

Really! You would? Why, Frank, you're quite
• delightful,—
Hot as Othello, and as black of hue;
Borrow my fan. I would not look so *frightful*,
If I were you!

FRANK.

“It is the cause.” I mean your chaperon is
Bringing some well-curled juvenile. Adieu!
I shall retire. I'd spare that poor Adonis,
If I were you!

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

NELLIE.

Go, if you will. At once! And by express, sir!
Where shall it be? To China—or Peru?
Go. I should leave inquirers my address, sir,
If I were you!

FRANK.

No,—I remain. To stay and fight a duel
Seems, on the whole, the proper thing to do;—
Ah, you are strong,—I would not then be cruel,
If I were you!

NELLIE.

One does not like one's feelings to be doubted,—

FRANK.

One does not like one's friends to misconstrue,—

NELLIE.

If I confess that I a wee-bit pouted?—

FRANK.

I should admit that I was *piqué*, too.

NELLIE.

Ask me to dance! I'd say no more about it,
If I were you!

[Waltz—*Exeunt*.

A DIALOGUE FROM PLATO

A DIALOGUE FROM PLATO

"Le temps le mieux employé est celui qu'on perd."

—CLAUDE TILLIER.

I'D "read" three hours. Both notes and text
Were fast a mist becoming;
In bounced a vagrant bee, perplexed,
And filled the room with humming,

Then out. The casement's leafage sways,
And, parted light, discloses
Miss Di., with hat and book,—a maze
Of muslin mixed with roses.

"You're reading Greek?" "I am—and you?"
"O, mine's a mere romancer!"
"So Plato is." "Then read him—do;
And I'll read mine in answer."

I read. "My Plato (Plato, too,—
That wisdom thus should harden!)
Declares 'blue eyes look doubly blue'
Beneath a Dolly Varden.'"

She smiled. "My book in turn avers
(No author's name is stated)
That sometimes those Philosophers
Are sadly mis-translated."

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

"But hear,—the next's in stronger style :
The Cynic School asserted
That two red lips which part and smile
May not be controverted ! "

She smiled once more—"My book, I find,
Observes some modern doctors
Would make the Cynics out a kind
Of album-verse concoctors."

Then I—"Why not? 'Ephesian law,
No less than time's tradition,
Enjoined fair speech on all who saw
DIANA'S apparition.' "

She blushed—this time. "If Plato's page
No wiser precept teaches,
Then I'd renounce that doubtful sage,
And walk to Burnham-beeches."

"Agreed," I said. "For Socrates
(I find he too is talking)
Thinks Learning can't remain at ease
While Beauty goes a-walking."

She read no more. I leapt the sill :
The sequel's scarce essential—
Nay, more than this, I hold it still
Profoundly confidential.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

POOR Rose ! I lift you from the street—
Far better I should own you,
Than you should lie for random feet,
Where careless hands have thrown you !

Poor pinky petals, crushed and torn !
Did heartless Mayfair use you,
Then cast you forth to lie forlorn,
For chariot wheels to bruise you ?

I saw you last in Edith's hair.
Rose, you would scarce discover
That I she passed upon the stair
Was Edith's favoured lover,

A month—"a little month"—ago—
O theme for moral writer !—
'Twixt you and me, my Rose, you know,
She might have been politer ;

But let that pass. She gave you then—
Behind the oleander—
To one, perhaps, of all the men,
Who best could understand her,—

VIGNETTES IN RHYME.

Cyril that, duly flattered, took,
As only Cyril's able,
With just the same Arcadian look
He used, last night, for Mabel ;

Then, having waltzed till every star
Had paled away in morning,
Lit up his cynical cigar,
And tossed you downward, scorning.

Kismet, my Rose ! Revenge is sweet,—
She made my heart-strings quiver ;
And yet—you sha'n't lie in the street,
I'll drop you in the River.

LOVE IN WINTER

LOVE IN WINTER

BETWEEN the berried holly-bush
The Blackbird whistled to the Thrush :
“ Which way did bright-eyed Bella go ?
Look, Speckle-breast, across the snow, —
Are those her dainty tracks I see,
That wind beside the shrubbery ? ”

The Thristle pecked the berries still.
“ No need for looking, Yellow-bill ;
Young Frank was there an hour ago,
Half frozen, waiting in the snow ;
His callow beard was white with rime, —
’Tchuck, — ’tis a merry pairing-time ! ”

“ What would you ? ” twittered in the Wren ;
“ These are the reckless ways of men.
I watched them bill and coo as though
They thought the sign of Spring was snow ;
If men but timed their loves as we,
’Twould save this inconsistency.”

“ Nay, Gossip,” chirped the Robin, “ nay ;
I like their unreflective way.
Besides, I heard enough to show
Their love is proof against the snow : —
‘ Why wait,’ he said, ‘ why wait for May,
When love can warm a winter’s day ? ’ ”

VIGNETTES IN RHYME.

POT-POURRI

“ Si jeunesse savait ?—”

I PLUNGE my hand among the leaves :
 (An alien touch but dust perceives,
 Nought else supposes ;)
For me those fragrant ruins raise
Clear memory of the vanished days
 When they were roses.

“ If youth but knew !” Ah, “ if,” in truth ?—
I can recall with what gay youth,
 To what light chorus,
Unsobered yet by time or change,
We roamed the many-gabled Grange,
 All life before us ;

Braved the old clock-tower’s dust and damp,
To catch the dim Arthurian camp
 In misty distance ;
Peered at the still-room’s sacred stores,
Or rapped at walls for sliding doors
 Of feigned existence.

What need had we for thoughts or cares !
The hot sun parched the old parterres
 And “ flowerful closes ” ;

POT-POURRI

We roused the rooks with rounds and glees,
Played hide-and-seek behind the trees,—
Then plucked these roses.

Louise was one—light, glib Louise,
So freshly freed from school decrees
You scarce could stop her ;
And Bell, the Beauty, unsurprised
At fallen locks that scandalised
Our dear “ Miss Proper ” ;—

Shy Ruth, all heart and tenderness,
Who wept—like Chaucer’s Prioress,
When Dash was smitten ;
Who blushed before the mildest men,
Yet waxed a very Corday when
You teased her kitten.

I loved them all. Bell first and best ;
Louise the next—for days of jest
Or madcap masking ;
And Ruth, I thought,—why, failing these,
When my High-Mightiness should please,
She’d come for asking.

Louise was grave when last we met ;
Bell’s beauty, like a sun, has set ;
And Ruth, Heaven bless her,
Ruth that I wooed,—and wooed in vain,—
Has gone where neither grief nor pain
Can now distress her.

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

DOROTHY

A REVERIE SUGGESTED BY THE NAME
UPON A PANE

SHE then must once have looked, as I
Look now, across the level rye,—
Past Church and Manor-house, and seen,
As now I see, the village green,
The bridge, and Walton's river—she
Whose old-world name was "Dorothy."

The swallows must have twittered, too,
Above her head ; the roses blew
Below, no doubt,—and, sure, the South
Crept up the wall and kissed her mouth,—
That wistful mouth, which comes to me
Linked with her name of Dorothy.

What was she like ? I picture her
Unmeet for uncouth worshipper ;—
Soft,—pensive,—far too subtly graced
To suit the blunt bucolic taste,

DOROTHY

Whose crude perception could but see
"Ma'am Fine-airs" in "Miss Dorothy."

How not? She loved, maybe, perfume,
Soft textures, lace, a half-lit room ;—
Perchance too candidly preferred
"Clarissa" to a gossip's word ;—
And, for the rest, would seem to be
Or proud, or dull—this Dorothy.

Poor child !—with heart the down-lined nest
Of warmest instincts unconfest,
Soft, callow things that vaguely felt
The breeze caress, the sunlight melt,
But yet, by some obscure decree,
Unwinged from birth ;—poor Dorothy !

Not less I dream her mute desire
To ached churl and booby squire,
Now pale, with timorous eyes that filled
At "twice-told tales" of foxes killed ;—
Now trembling when slow tongues grew free
'Twixt sport, and Port—and Dorothy !

'Twas then she'd seek this nook, and find
Its evening landscape balmy-kind ;
And here, where still her gentle name
Lives on the old green glass, would frame
Fond dreams of unfound harmony
'Twixt heart and heart. Poor Dorothy !

VIGNETTES IN RHYME.

L'ENVOI.

These last I spoke. Then Florence said,
Below me,—“ Dreams? Delusions, Fred ! ”
Next, with a pause,—she bent the while
Over a rose, with roguish smile—
“ But how disgusted, Sir, you'll be
To hear *I* scrawled that ‘ Dorothy.’ ”

AVICE

A V I C E

"On serait tenté de lui dire, Bonjour, Mademoiselle la Bergeronnette."—VICTOR HUGO.

THOUGH the voice of modern schools
Has demurred,
By the dreamy Asian creed
'Tis averred,
That the souls of men, released
From their bodies when deceased,
Sometimes enter in a beast,—
Or a bird.

I have watched you long, Avice,—
Watched you so,
I have found your secret out ;
And I know
That the restless ribboned things,
Where your slope of shoulder springs,
Are but undeveloped wings
That will grow.

When you enter in a room,
It is stirred
With the wayward, flashing flight
Of a bird ;

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

And you speak—and bring with you
Leaf and sun-ray, bud and blue,
And the wind-breath and the dew,
At a word.

When you called to me my name,
Then again
When I heard your single cry
In the lane,
All the sound was as the “sweet”
Which the birds to birds repeat
In their thank-song to the heat
After rain.

When you sang the *Schwalbenlied*,
’Twas absurd,—
But it seemed no human note
That I heard ;
For your strain had all the trills,
All the little shakes and stills,
Of the over-song that rills
From a bird.

You have just their eager, quick
“*Airs de tête*,”
All their flush and fever-heat
When elate ;
Every bird-like nod and beck,
And a bird’s own curve of neck
When she gives a little peck
To her mate.

AVICE

When you left me, only now,
In that furred,
Puffed, and feathered Polish dress,
I was spurred
Just to catch you, O my Sweet,
By the bodice trim and neat,—
Just to feel your heart a-beat,
Like a bird.

*Yet, alas! Love's light you deign
But to wear
As the dew upon your plumes,
And you care
Not a whit for rest or hush;
But the leaves, the lyric gush,
And the wing-power, and the rush
Of the air.

So I dare not woo you, Sweet,
For a day,
Lest I lose you in a flash,
As I may ;
Did I tell you tender things,
You would shake your sudden wings ;—
You would start from him who sings,
And away.

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

THE LOVE-LETTER

“*J’ai vu les maurs de mon tems, et j’ai publié cette lettre.*”

—LA NOUVELLE HÉLOÏSE.

IF this should fail, why then I scarcely know
What could succeed. Here’s brilliancy (and
banter),

Byron *ad lib.*, a chapter of Rousseau ;—

If this should fail, then *tempora mutantur* ;
Style’s out of date, and love, as a profession,
Acquires no aid from beauty of expression.

“The men who think as I, I fear, are few,”
(Cynics would say, ’twere well if they were fewer) ;
“I am not what I seem,”—(indeed, ’tis true ;
Though, as a sentiment, it might be newer) ;
“Mine is a soul whose deeper feelings lie
More deep than words ”—(as these exemplify).

“I will not say when first your beauty’s sun
Illumed my life,”—(it needs imagination) ;
“For me to see you and to love were one,”—
(This will account for some precipitation) ;
“Let it suffice that worship more devoted
Ne’er throbb’d,” *et cætera*. The rest is quoted.

THE LOVE-LETTER

"If Love can look with all-prophetic eye,"—
 (Ah, if he could, how many would be single!)
"If truly spirit unto spirit cry,"—
 (The ears of some most terribly must tingle!)
"Then I have dreamed you will not turn your
 face."

This next, I think, is more than commonplace.

"Why should we speak, if Love, interpreting,
 Forestall the speech with favour found before?
Why should we plead?—it were an idle thing,
 If Love himself be Love's ambassador!"
Blot, as I live! Shall we erase it? No;—
"Twill show we write *currente calamo*.

"My fate,—my fortune, I commit to you,"—
 (In point of fact, the latter's not extensive);
"Without you I am poor indeed,"—(strike through,
 'Tis true but crude—'twould make her apprehensive);
"My life is yours—I lay it at your feet,"
(Having no choice but Hymen or the Fleet).

"Give me the right to stand within the shrine,
 Where never yet my faltering feet intruded;
Give me the right to call you wholly mine,"—
 (That is, Consols and Three-per-Cents included);
"To guard your rest from every care that
 cankers,—
To keep your life, — (and balance at your
 banker's).

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

“Compel me not to long for your reply ;
Suspense makes havoc with the mind—(and
muscles) ;
“Winged Hope takes flight,”—(which means that
I must fly,
Default of funds, to Paris or to Brussels) ;
“I cannot wait ! My own, my queen—PRISCILLA !
Write by return.” And *now* for a Manilla !

“Miss Blank,” at “Blank.” Jemima, let it go ;
And I, meanwhile, will idle with “Sir Walter” ;
Stay, let me keep the first rough copy, though—
’Twill serve again. There’s but the name to
alter ;
And Love,—that starves,—must knock at every
portal,
In formâ pauperis. We are but mortal !

THE MISOGYNIST

THE MISOGYNIST

"Il était un jeune homme d'un bien beau passé."

WHEN first he sought our haunts, he wore
His locks in Hamlet-style ;
His brow with thought was "sicklied o'er,"—
We rarely saw him smile ;
And, e'en when none was looking on,
His air was always woe-begone.

He kept, I think, his bosom bare
To imitate Jean Paul ;
His solitary topics were
Æsthetics, Fate, and Soul ;—
Although at times, but not for long,
He bowed his Intellect to song.

He served, he said, a Muse of Tears :
I know his verses breathed
A fine funereal air of biers,
And objects cypress-wreathed ;—
Indeed, his tried acquaintance fled
An ode he named "The Sheeted Dead."

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

In these light moods, I call to mind,
He darkly would allude
To some dread sorrow undefined,—
Some passion unsubdued ;
Then break into a ghastly laugh,
And talk of Keats his epitaph.

He railed at women's faith as Cant ;
We thought him grandest when
He named them Siren-shapes that "chant
On blanching bones of Men" ;—
Alas, not e'en the great go free
From that insidious minstrelsy !

His lot, he oft would gravely urge,
Lay on a lone Rock where
Around Time-beaten bases surge
The Billows of Despair.
We dreamed it true. We never knew
What gentler ears he told it to.

We, bound with him in common care,
One-minded, celibate,
Resolved to Thought and Diet spare
Our lives to dedicate ;—
We, truly, in no common sense,
Deserved his closest confidence !

But soon, and yet, though soon, too late,
We, sorrowing, sighed to find
A gradual softness enervate
That all superior mind,

THE MISOGYNIST

Until,—in full assembly met,
He dared to speak of Etiquette.

The verse that we severe had known,
Assumed a wanton air,—
A fond effeminate monotone
Of eyebrows, lips, and hair ;
Not *ἦθος* stirred him now or *νοῦς*,
He read “The Angel in the House” !

Nay worse. He, once sublime to chaff,
Grew ludicrously sore
If we but named a photograph
We found him simpering o’er ;
Or told how in his chambers lurked
A watch-guard intricately worked.

Then worse again. He tried to dress ;
He trimmed his tragic mane ;
Announced at length (to our distress)
He had not “lived in vain” ;—
Thenceforth his one prevailing mood
Became a base beatitude.

And O Jean Paul, and Fate, and Soul !
We met him last, grown stout,
His throat with wedlock’s triple roll,
“All wool,” enwound about ;
His very hat had changed its brim ;—
Our course was clear,—WE BANISHED HIM !

VIGNETTES IN RHYME.

A VIRTUOSO

BE seated, pray. "A grave appeal"?
The sufferers by the war, of course;
Ah, what a sight for us who feel,—
This monstrous *mélodrame* of Force!
We, Sir, we connoisseurs, should know,
On whom its heaviest burden falls;
Collections shattered at a blow,
Museums turned to hospitals!

"And worse," you say; "the wide distress!"
Alas, 'tis true distress exists,
Though, let me add, our worthy Press
Have no mean skill as colourists;
Speaking of colour, next your seat
There hangs a sketch from Vernet's hand;
Some Moscow fancy, incomplete,
Yet not indifferently planned;

Note specially the gray old Guard,
Who tears his tattered coat to wrap
A closer bandage round the scarred
And frozen comrade in his lap;—

A VIRTUOSO

But, as regards the present war,—
Now don't you think our pride of pence
Goes—may I say it?—somewhat far
For objects of benevolence?

You hesitate. For my part, I—
Though ranking Paris next to Rome,
Æsthetically—still reply
That “Charity begins at Home.”
The words remind me. Did you catch
My so-named “Hunt”? The girl's a gem;
And look how those lean rascals snatch
The pile of scraps she brings to them!

“But your appeal's for home,”—you say,—
For home, and English poor! Indeed!
I thought Philanthropy to-day
Was blind to mere domestic need—
However sore—Yet though one grants
That home should have the foremost claims,
At least these Continental wants
Assume intelligible names;

While here with us—Ah! who could hope
To verify the varied pleas,
Or from his private means to cope
With all our shrill necessities!
Impossible! One might as well
Attempt comparison of creeds;
Or fill that huge Malayan shell
With these half-dozen Indian beads.

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

Moreover, add that every one
So well exalts his pet distress,
'Tis—Give to all, or give to none,
If you'd avoid invidiousness.
Your case, I feel, is sad as A.'s,
The same applies to B.'s and C.'s ;
By my selection I should raise
An alphabet of rivalries ;

And life is short,—I see you look
At yonder dish, a priceless bit ;
You'll find it etched in Jacquemart's book,
They say that Raphael painted it ;—
And life is short, you understand ;
So, if I only hold you out
An open though an empty hand,
Why, you'll forgive me, I've no doubt.

Nay, do not rise. You seem amused ;
One can but be consistent, Sir !
'Twas on these grounds I just refused
Some gushing lady-almoner,—
Believe me, on these very grounds.
Good-bye, then. Ah, a rarity !
That cost me quite three hundred pounds,—
That Dürer figure,—“Charity.”

LAISSEZ FAIRE

LAISSEZ FAIRE

*“Prophete rechts, Prophete links,
Das Weltkind in der Mitten.”*

—GOETHE'S *Diné zu Coblenz*.

TO left, here's B., half-Communist,
Who talks a chastened treason,
And C., a something-else in “ist,”
Harangues, to right, on Reason.

B., from his “tribune,” fulminates
At Throne and Constitution,
Nay—with the walnuts—advocates
Reform by revolution ;



While C.'s peculiar coterie
Have now in full rehearsal
Some patent new Philosophy
To make doubt universal.

And yet—why not? If zealots burn,
Their zeal has not affected
My taste for salmon and Sauterne,
Or I might have objected :—

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

Friend B., the argument you choose
Has been by France refuted ;
And C., *mon cher*, your novel views
Are just Tom Paine, diluted ;

There's but one creed,—that's *Laissez faire*,
Behold its mild apostle !
My dear, declamatory pair,
Although you shout and jostle,

Not your ephemeral hands, nor mine,
Time's Gordian knots shall sunder,—
WILL laid three casks of this old wine :
Who'll drink the last, I wonder ?

TO Q. H. F.

TO Q. H. F.

SUGGESTED BY A CHAPTER IN SIR THEODORE
MARTIN'S "HORACE"

("ANCIENT CLASSICS FOR ENGLISH READERS")

"HORATIUS FLACCUS, B.C. 8,"
There's not a doubt about the date,—
You're dead and buried :
As you observed, the seasons roll ;
And 'cross the Styx full many a soul
Has Charon ferried,
Since, mourned of men and Muses nine,
They laid you on the Esquiline.

And that was centuries ago !
You'd think we'd learned enough, I know,
To help refine us,
Since last you trod the Sacred Street,
And tacked from mortal fear to meet
The bore Crispinus ;
Or, by your cold Digentia, set
The web of winter birding-net.

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

Ours is so far-advanced an age !
Sensation tales, a classic stage,
Commodious villas !
We boast high art, an Albert Hall,
Australian meats, and men who call
Their sires gorillas !
We have a thousand things, you see,
Not dreamt in your philosophy.

And yet, how strange ! Our "world," to-day,
Tried in the scale, would scarce outweigh
Your Roman cronies ;
Walk in the Park—you'll seldom fail
To find a Sybaris on the rail
By Lydia's ponies,
Or hap on Barrus, wigged and stayed,
Ogling some unsuspecting maid.

The great Gargilius, then, behold !
His "long-bow " hunting tales of old
Are now but duller ;
Fair Neobule too ! Is not
One Hebrus here—from Aldershot ?
Aha, you colour !
Be wise. There old Canidia sits ;
No doubt she's tearing you to bits.

And look, dyspeptic, brave, and kind,
Comes dear Mæcenas, half behind
Terentia's skirting ;

To Q. H. F.

Here's Pyrrha, "golden-haired" at will ;
Prig Damasippus, preaching still ;
 Asterie flirting,—
Radiant, of course. We'll make her black,—
Ask her when Gyges' ship comes back.

So with the rest. Who will may trace
Behind the new each elder face
 Defined as clearly ;
Science proceeds, and man stands still ;
Our "world" to-day's as good or ill,—
 As cultured (nearly),—
As yours was, Horace ! You alone,
Unmatched, unmet, we have not known.

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

TO "LYDIA LANGUISH"

"Il me faut des émotions."

—BLANCHE AMORY.

YOU ask me, Lydia, "whether I,
If you refuse my suit, shall die."
(Now pray don't let this hurt you !)
Although the time be out of joint,
I should not think a bodkin's point
The sole resource of virtue ;
Nor shall I, though your mood endure,
Attempt a final Water-cure
Except against my wishes ;
For I respectfully decline
To dignify the Serpentine,
And make *hors-d'œuvres* for fishes ;
But if you ask me whether I
Composedly can go,
Without a look, without a sigh,
Why, then I answer—No.

"You are assured," you sadly say
(If in this most considerate way
To treat my suit your will is),
That I shall "quickly find as fair
Some new Neæra's tangled hair—
Some easier Amaryllis."

TO "LYDIA LANGUISH"

I cannot promise to be cold
If smiles are kind as yours of old
 On lips of later beauties ;
Nor can I, if I would, forget
The homage that is Nature's debt,
 While man has social duties ;
But if you ask shall I prefer
 To you I honour so,
A somewhat visionary Her,
 I answer truly—No.

You fear, you frankly add, "to find
In me too late the altered mind
 That altering Time estranges."
To this I make response that we
(As physiologists agree)
 Must have septennial changes ;
This is a thing beyond control,
And it were best upon the whole
 To try and find out whether
We could not, by some means, arrange
This not-to-be-avoided change
 So as to change together :
But, had you asked me to allow
 That you could ever grow
Less amiable than you are now,—
 Emphatically—No.

But—to be serious—if you care
To know how I shall really bear
 This much-discussed rejection,

VIGNETTES IN RHYME,

I answer you. As feeling men
Behave, in best romances, when
You outrage their affection ;—
With that gesticulatory woe,
By which, as melodramas show,
Despair is indicated ;
Enforced by all the liquid grief
Which hugest pocket-handkerchief
Has ever simulated ;
And when, arrived so far, you say
In tragic accents “ Go,”
Then, Lydia, then . . . I still shall stay,
And firmly answer—No.

A GAGE D'AMOUR

A GAGE D'AMOUR

(HORACE, III. 8)

*“ Martiis cælebs quid agam Kalendis
—— miraris ? ”*

CHARLES,—for it seems you wish to
 know,—
You wonder what could scare me so,
And why, in this long-locked bureau,
 With trembling fingers,—
With tragic air, I now replace
This ancient web of yellow lace,
Among whose faded folds the trace
 Of perfume lingers.

Friend of my youth, severe as true,
I guess the train your thoughts pursue ;
But this my state is nowise due
 To indigestion ;
I had forgotten it was there,
A scarf that Some-one used to wear.
Hinc illæ lacrimæ,—so spare
 Your cynic question.

VIGNETTES IN RHYME.

Some-one who is not girlish now,
And wed long since. We meet and bow ;
I don't suppose our broken vow
Affects us keenly ;
Yet, trifling though my act appears,
Your Sternes would make it ground for tears ;—
One can't disturb the dust of years,
And smile serenely.

“ My golden locks ” are gray and chill,
For hers,—let them be sacred still ;
But yet, I own, a boyish thrill
Went dancing through me,
Charles, when I held yon yellow lace ;
For, from its dusty hiding-place,
Peeped out an arch, ingenuous face
That beckoned to me.

We shut our heart up, nowadays,
Like some old music-box that plays
Unfashionable airs that raise
Derisive pity ;
Alas,—a nothing starts the spring ;
And lo, the sentimental thing
At once commences quavering
Its lover's ditty.

Laugh, if you like. The boy in me,—
The boy that was,—revived to see
The fresh young smile that shone when she,
Of old, was tender.

A GAGE D'AMOUR

Once more we trod the Golden Way,—
That mother you saw yesterday,—
And I, whom none can well portray,
As young, or slender.

She twirled the flimsy scarf about
Her pretty head, and stepping out
Slipped arm in mine, with half a pout
Of childish pleasure.
Where we were bound no mortal knows,
For then you plunged in Ireland's woes,
And brought me blankly back to prose
And Gladstone's measure.

Well, well, the wisest bend to Fate.
My brown old books around me wait,
My pipe still holds, unconfiscate,
Its wonted station.
Pass me the wine. To Those that keep
The bachelor's secluded sleep
Peaceful, inviolate, and deep,
I pour libation !

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

CUPID'S ALLEY

A MORALITY

*O, Love's but a dance,
Where Time plays the fiddler,
See the couples advance,—
O, Love's but a dance!
A whisper, a glance,—
"Shall we twirl down the middle?"
O, Love's but a dance,
Where Time plays the fiddle!*

IT runs (so saith my Chronicler)
Across a smoky City ;—
A Babel filled with buzz and whirr,
Huge, gloomy, black and gritty ;
Dark-louring looks the hill-side near,
Dark-yawning looks the valley,—
But here 'tis always fresh and clear,
For here—is "Cupid's Alley."

And, from an Arbour cool and green,
With aspect down the middle,
An ancient Fiddler, gray and lean,
Scrapes on an ancient fiddle ;
Alert he seems, but aged enow
To punt the Stygian galley ;—
With wisp of forelock on his brow,
He plays—in "Cupid's Alley."

CUPID'S ALLEY

All day he plays,—a single tune!—
But, by the oddest chances,
Gavotte, or Brawl, or Rigadoon,
It suits all kinds of dances ;
My Lord may walk a *pas de Cour*
To Jenny's *pas de Chalet* ;—
The folks who ne'er have danced before,
Can dance—in “Cupid's Alley.”

And here, for ages yet untold,
Long, long before my ditty,
Came high and low, and young and old,
From out the crowded City ;
And still to-day they come, they go,
And just as fancies tally,
They foot it quick, they foot it slow,
All day—in “Cupid's Alley.”

Strange Dance ! 'Tis free to Rank and Rags ;
Here no distinction flatters,
Here Riches shakes its money-bags,
And Poverty its tatters ;
Church, Army, Navy, Physic, Law ;—
Maid, Mistress, Master, Valet ;
Long locks, gray hairs, bald heads, and a',—
They bob—in “Cupid's Alley.”

Strange pairs ! To laughing, light Fifteen
Here capers Prudence thrifty ;
Here-Prodigal leads down the green
A blushing Maid of fifty ;

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

Some treat it as a serious thing,
And some but shilly-shally;
And some have danced without the ring
(Ah me!)—in “Cupid’s Alley.”

And sometimes one to one will dance,
And think of one behind her;
And one by one will stand, perchance,
Yet look all ways to find her;
Some seek a partner with a sigh,
Some win him with a sally;
And some, they know not how nor why,
Strange fate!—of “Cupid’s Alley.”

And some will dance an age or so
Who came for half a minute;
And some, who like the game, will go
Before they well begin it;
And some will vow they’re “danced to death,”
Who (somehow) always rally;
Strange cures are wrought (mine Author saith),
Strange cures!—in “Cupid’s Alley.”

It may be one will dance to-day,
And dance no more to-morrow;
It may be one will steal away
And nurse a life-long sorrow;
What then? The rest advance, evade,
Unite, dispart, and dally,
Re-set, coquet, and gallopade,
Not less—in “Cupid’s Alley.”

CUPID'S ALLEY

For till that City's wheel-work vast
And shuddering beams shall crumble ;—
And till that Fiddler lean at last
From off his seat shall tumble ;—
Till then (the Civic records say),
This quaint, fantastic *ballet*
Of Go and Stay, of Yea and Nay,
Must last—in "Cupid's Alley."

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

THE IDYLL OF THE CARP

(The SCENE is in a garden,—where you please,
So that it lie in France, and have withal
Its gray-stoned pond beneath the arching trees,
And Triton huge, with moss for coronal.
A PRINCESS,—feeding fish. To her DENISE.)

THE PRINCESS.

THESE, DENISE, are my Suitors !

DENISE.

Where ?

THE PRINCESS.

These fish.

I feed them daily here at morn and night
With crumbs of favour,—scraps of graciousness,
Not meant, indeed, to mean the thing they wish,
But serving just to edge an appetite.

(Throwing bread.)

Make haste, *Messieurs !* Make haste, then !

Hurry. See,—

See how they swim ! Would you not say, confess,
Some crowd of Courtiers in the audience hall,
When the King comes ?

DENISE.

You're jesting !

THE IDYLL OF THE CARP

THE PRINCESS.

Not at all.

Watch but the great one yonder ! There's the Duke ;—

Those gill-marks mean his Order of St. Luke ;
Those old skin-stains his boasted quarterings.
Look what a swirl and roll of tide he brings ;
Have you not marked him thus, with crest in air,
Breathing disdain, descend the palace-stair ?
You surely have, DENISE.

DENISE.

I think I have.

But there's another, older and more grave,—
The one that wears the round patch on the throat,
And swims with such slow fins. Is he of note ?

THE PRINCESS.

Why that's my good *chambellan*—with his seal.
A kind old man !—he carves me orange-peel
In quaint devices at refection-hours,
Equips my sweet-pouch, brings me morning
 flowers,
Or chirrup madrigals with old, sweet words,
Such as men loved when people wooed like
 birds
And spoke the true note first. No suitor he,
Yet loves me too,—though in a graybeard's key.

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

DENISE.

Look, Madam, look !—a fish without a stain !
O speckless, fleckless fish ! Who is it, pray,
That bears him so discreetly ?

THE PRINCESS.

FONTENAY.

You know him not ? My prince of shining locks !
My pearl !—my Phoenix !—my pomander-box !
He loves not Me, alas ! The man's too vain !
He loves his doublet better than my suit,—
His graces than my favours. Still his sash
Sits not amiss, and he can touch the lute
Not wholly out of tune—

DENISE.

Ai ! what a splash !

Who is it comes with such a sudden dash
Plump i' the midst, and leaps the others clear ?

THE PRINCESS.

Ho ! for a trumpet ! Let the bells be rung !
Baron of *Sans-terre*, Lord of *Prés-en-Cieux*,
Vidame of *Vol-au-Vent*—“*et aultres lieux !*”
Bah ! How I hate his Gasconading tongue !
Why, that's my bragging Bravo-Musketeer—
My carpet cut-throat, valiant by a scar
Got in a brawl that stands for Spanish war :—
His very life's a splash !

THE IDYLL OF THE CARP

DENISE.

I'd rather wear
E'en such a patched and melancholy air,
As his,—that motley one,—who keeps the wall,
And hugs his own lean thoughts for carnival.

THE PRINCESS.

My frankest wooer ! Thus *his* love he tells
To mournful moving of his cap and bells.
He loves me (so he saith) as Slaves the Free,—
As Cowards War,—as young Maids Constancy.
Item, he loves me as the Hawk the Dove ;
He loves me as the Inquisition Thought ;—

DENISE.

“ He loves ?—he loves ? ” Why all this loving's
naught !

THE PRINCESS.

And “ Naught (quoeth JACQUOT) makes the sum
of Love ! ”

DENISE.

The cynic knave ! How call you this one here ?—
This small shy-looking fish, that hovers near,
And circles, like a cat around a cage,
To snatch the surplus.

VIGNETTES IN RHYME.

THE PRINCESS.

CHÉRUBIN, the page.

'Tis but a child, yet with that roguish smile,
And those sly looks, the child will make hearts
ache

Not five years hence, I prophesy. Meanwhile,
He lives to plague the swans upon the lake,
To steal my comfits, and the monkey's cake.

DENISE.

And these—that swim aside—who may these be?

THE PRINCESS.

Those—are two gentlemen of Picardy.
Equal in blood,—of equal bravery :—
D'AURELLES and MAUFRIGNAC. They hunt in pair ;
I mete them morsels with an equal care,
Lest they should eat each other,—or eat Me.

DENISE.

And that—and that—and that?

THE PRINCESS.

I name them not.
Those are the crowd who merely think their lot
The lighter by my land.

THE IDYLL OF THE CARP

DENISE.

And is there none
More prized than most? There surely must be
one,—
A Carp of carps!

THE PRINCESS.

Ah me!—he will not come!
He swims at large,—looks shyly on,—is dumb.
Sometimes, indeed, I think he fain would nibble,
But while he stays with doubts and fears to
quibble,
Some gilded fop, or mincing courtier-fribble,
Slips smartly in,—and gets the proffered crumb.
He should have all my crumbs—if he'd but ask;
Nay, an he would, it were no hopeless task
To gain a something more. But though he's
brave,
He's far too proud to be a dangling slave;
And then—he's modest! So . . . he will not
come!

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

THE SUNDIAL

'TIS an old dial, dark with many a stain ;
In summer crowned with drifting orchard
bloom,
Tricked in the autumn with the yellow rain,
And white in winter like a marble tomb ;

And round about its gray, time-eaten brow
Lean letters speak—a worn and shattered
row :

I am a Shade : a Shadow too art thou :
I mark the Time : say, Gossip, dost thou see ?

Here would the ringdoves linger, head to head ;
And here the snail a silver course would run,
Beating old Time ; and here the peacock spread
His gold-green glory, shutting out the sun.

The tardy shade moved forward to the noon ;
Betwixt the paths a dainty Beauty stopt,
That swung a flower, and, smiling, hummed a
tune,—
Before whose feet a barking spaniel leapt.

THE SUNDIAL

O'er her blue dress an endless blossom strayed ;
About her tendril-curls the sunlight shone ;
And round her train the tiger-lilies swayed,
Like courtiers bowing till the queen be gone.

She leaned upon the slab a little while,
Then drew a jewelled pencil from her zone,
Scribbled a something with a frolic smile,
Folded, inscribed, and niched it in the stone.

The shade slipped on, no swifter than the snail ;
There came a second lady to the place,
Dove-eyed, dove-robed, and something wan and
pale—
An inner beauty shining from her face.

She, as if listless with a lonely love,
Straying among the alleys with a book,—
Herrick or Herbert,—watched the circling dove,
And spied the tiny letter in the nook.

Then, like to one who confirmation found
Of some dread secret half-accounted true,—
Who knew what hands and hearts the letter
bound,
And argued loving commerce 'twixt the two,—

She bent her fair young forehead on the stone ;
The dark shade gloomed an instant on her
head ;
And 'twixt her taper-fingers pearled and shone
The single tear that tear-worn eyes will shed.

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

The shade slipped onward to the falling gloom ;
There came a soldier gallant in her stead,
Swinging a beaver with a swaling plume,
A ribboned love-lock rippling from his head ;

Blue-eyed, frank-faced, with clear and open brow,
Scar-seamed a little, as the women love ;
So kindly fronted that you marvel how
The frequent sword-hilt had so frayed his glove ;

Who switched at Psyche plunging in the sun ;
Uncrowned three lilies with a backward swinge ;
And standing somewhat widely, like to one
More used to " Boot and Saddle " than to cringe

As courtiers do, but gentleman withal,
Took out the note ; held it as one who feared
The fragile thing he held would slip and fall ;
Read and re-read, pulling his tawny beard ;

Kissed it, I think, and hid it in his breast ;
Laughed softly in a flattered happy way ;
Arranged the brodered baldrick on his chest,
And sauntered past, singing a roundelay.

.

The shade crept forward through the dying glow ;
There came no more nor dame nor cavalier ;
But for a little time the brass will show
A small gray spot—the record of a tear.

AN UNFINISHED SONG

AN UNFINISHED SONG

"Cantat Deo qui vivit Deo."

YES, he was well-nigh gone and near his rest,
The year could not renew him ; nor the cry
Of building nightingales about the nest ;
Nor that soft freshness of the May-wind's sigh,

That fell before the garden scents, and died
Between the ampler leafage of the trees :
All these he knew not, lying open-eyed,
Deep in a dream that was not pain nor ease,

But death not yet. Outside a woman talked—
His wife she was—whose clicking needles sped
To faded phrases of complaint that balked
My rising words of comfort. Overhead,

A cage that hung amid the jasmine stars
Trembled a little, and a blossom dropped.
Then notes came pouring through the wicker
bars,
Climbed half a rapid arc of song, and stopped.

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

"Is it a thrush?" I asked. "A thrush," she said.

"That was Will's tune. Will taught him that
before

He left the doorway settle for his bed,

Sick as you see, and couldn't teach him more.

"He'd bring his Bible here o' nights, would Will,

Following the light, and whiles when it was dark

And days were warm, he'd sit there whistling still,

Teaching the bird. He whistled like a lark."

"Jack! Jack!" A joyous flutter stirred the cage,

Shaking the blossoms down. The bird began;

The woman turned again to want and wage,

And in the inner chamber sighed the man.

How clear the song was! Musing as I heard,

My fancies wandered from the droning wife

To sad comparison of man and bird,—

The broken song, the uncompleted life,

That seemed a broken song; and of the two,

My thought a moment deemed the bird more
blest,

That, when the sun shone, sang the notes it knew,

Without desire or knowledge of the rest.

Nay, happier man. For him futurity

Still hides a hope that this his earthly praise

Finds heavenly end, for surely will not He,

Solver of all, above his Flower of Days,

AN UNFINISHED SONG

Teach him the song that no one living knows ?

Let the man die, with that half-chant of his,—
What Now discovers not Hereafter shows,
And God will surely teach him more than this.

Again the Bird. I turned, and passed along ;
But Time and Death, Eternity and Change,
Talked with me ever, and the climbing song
Rose in my hearing, beautiful and strange.

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

THE CHILD-MUSICIAN

HE had played for his lordship's levee,
He had played for her ladyship's whim,
Till the poor little head was heavy,
And the poor little brain would swim.

And the face grew peaked and eerie,
And the large eyes strange and bright,
And they said—too late—“He is weary!
He shall rest for, at least, To-night!”

But at dawn, when the birds were waking,
As they watched in the silent room,
With the sound of a strained cord breaking,
A something snapped in the gloom.

'Twas a string of his violoncello,
And they heard him stir in his bed:—
“Make room for a tired little fellow,
Kind God!” was the last that he said.

THE CRADLE

THE CRADLE

HOW steadfastly she'd worked at it !
How lovingly had drest
With all her would-be-mother's wit
That little rosy nest !

How longingly she'd hung on it !—
It sometimes seemed, she said,
There lay beneath its coverlet
A little sleeping head.

He came at last, the tiny guest,
Ere bleak December fled ;
That rosy nest he never prest . .
Her coffin was his bed.

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

BEFORE SEDAN

"The dead hand clasped a letter."

—SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

HERE in this leafy place
Quiet he lies,
Cold, with his sightless face
Turned to the skies ;
'Tis but another dead ;
All you can say is said.

Carry his body hence,—
Kings must have slaves ;
Kings climb to eminence
Over men's graves :
So this man's eye is dim ;—
Throw the earth over him.

What was the white you touched,
There, at his side ?
Paper his hand had clutched
Tight ere he died ;—
Message or wish, may be ;—
Smooth the folds out and see.

BEFORE SEDAN

Hardly the worst of us
 Here could have smiled !—
Only the tremulous
 Words of a child ;—
Prattle, that has for stops
Just a few ruddy drops.

Look. She is sad to miss,
 Morning and night,
His—her dead father's—kiss ;
 Tries to be bright,
Good to mamma, and sweet.
That is all. “ Marguerite.”

Ah, if beside the dead
 Slumbered the pain !
Ah, if the hearts that bled
 Slept with the slain !
If the grief died ;—But no ;—
Death will not have it so.

VIGNETTES IN RHYME*

THE FORGOTTEN GRAVE

A SKETCH IN A CEMETERY

OUT from the City's dust and roar,
You wandered through the open door;
Paused at a plaything pail and spade
Across a tiny hillock laid;
Then noted on your dexter side
Some moneyed mourner's "love or pride,"
And so,—beyond a hawthorn-tree,
Showering its rain of rosy bloom
Alike on low and lofty tomb,—
You came upon it—suddenly.

How strange! The very grasses' growth
Around it seemed forlorn and loath;
The very ivy seemed to turn
Askance that wreathed the neighbour urn.
The slab had sunk; the head declined,
And left the rails a wreck behind.
No name; you traced a "6,"—a "7,"
Part of "affliction" and of "Heaven";
And then, in letters sharp and clear,
You read—O Irony austere!—
"Tho' lost to Sight, to Mem'ry dear."

• MY LANDLADY

MY LANDLADY

A SMALL brisk woman, capped with many a
bow ; •

“ Yes,” so she says, “ and younger, too, than
some,”

Who bids me, bustling, “ God speed,” when I go,
And gives me, rustling, “ Welcome,” when I
come.

“ Ay, sir, ’tis cold,—and freezing hard,—they say ;

I’d like to give that hulking brute a hit—

Beating his horse in such a shameful way !—

Step here, sir, till your fire’s blazed up a bit.”

A musky haunt of lavender and shells,

Quaint-figured Chinese monsters, toys, and
trays—

A life’s collection—where each object tells

Of fashions gone and half-forgotten ways :—

A glossy screen, where wide-mouth dragons ramp ;

A vexed inscription in a sampler-frame ;

A shade of beads upon a red-capped lamp ;

A child’s mug graven with a golden name ;

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

A pictured ship, with full-blown canvas set ;
A card, with sea-weed twisted to a wreath,
Circling a silky curl as black as jet,
With yellow writing faded underneath.

Looking, I sink within the shrouded chair,
And note the objects slowly, one by one,
And light at last upon a portrait there,—
Wide-collared, raven-haired. “Yes, ’tis my
son !”

“Where is he?” “Ah, sir, he is dead—my
boy !
Nigh ten long years ago—in ’sixty-three ;
He’s always living in my head—my boy !
He was left drowning in the Southern Sea.

“There were two souls washed overboard, they
said,
And one the waves brought back ; but he was
left.
They saw him place the life-buoy o’er his head ;
The sea was running wildly ;—he was left.

“He was a strong, strong swimmer. Do you
know,
When the wind whistled yesternight, I cried,
And prayed to God,—though ’twas so long
ago,—
He did not struggle much before he died.

MY LANDLADY

“’Twas his third voyage. That’s the box he brought,—

Or would have brought—my poor deserted boy !
And these the words the agents sent — they thought

That money, perhaps, could make my loss a joy.

“Look, sir, I’ve something here that I prize more :

This is a fragment of the poor lad’s coat,—
That other clutched him as the wave went o’er,
And this stayed in his hand. That’s what they wrote.

“Well, well, ’tis done. My story’s shocking you ;—

Grief is for them that have both time and wealth :

We can’t mourn much, who have much work to do ;—

Your fire is bright. Thank God, I have my health ! ”

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

BEFORE THE CURTAIN

“MISS PEACOCK ’s called.” And who
demurs?

Not I who write, for certain ;
If praise be due, one sure prefers
That some such face as fresh as hers
Should come before the curtain.

And yet, most strange to say, I find
(E’en bards are sometimes prosy)
Her presence here but brings to mind
That undistinguished crowd behind
For whom life’s not so rosy.

The pleased young *premier* led her on, ‘
But where are all the others ?
Where is that nimble servant John ?
And where’s the comic Uncle gone ?
And where that best of Mothers ?

Where is “Sir Lumley Leycester, Bart.” ?
And where the crafty Cousin ?—
That man *may* have a kindly heart,
And yet each night (’tis in the part)
Must poison half-a-dozen !

BEFORE THE CURTAIN

Where is the cool Detective,—he
Should surely be applauded?
The Lawyer, who refused the fee?—
The Wedding Guests (in number three)?—
Why are they all defrauded?

The men who worked the cataract?
The plush-clad carpet lifters?—
Where is the countless host, in fact,
Whose cue is not to speak, but act,—
The “supers” and the shifters?

Think what a crowd whom none recall,
Unsung,—unpraised,—unpitied;
Women for whom no bouquets fall,
And men whose names no galleries bawl,—
The Great unBenefit-ed!

Ah, Reader, ere you turn the page,
I leave you this for Moral:—
Remember those who tread Life's stage
With weary feet and scantest wage,
And ne'er a leaf for laurel!

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

A NIGHTINGALE IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

THEY paused,—the cripple in the chair,
More bent with pain than age ;
The mother with her lines of care ;
The many-buttoned page ;

The noisy, red-cheeked nursery-maid,
With straggling train of three ;
The Frenchman with his frogs and braid ;—
All, curious, paused to see,

If possible, the small, dusk bird
That from the almond bough,
Had poured the joyous chant they heard,
So suddenly, but now.

And one poor POET stopped and thought—
How many a lonely lay
That bird had sung ere fortune brought
It near the common way,

NIGHTINGALE IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

Where the crowd hears the note. And then,—
What birds must sing the song,
To whom that hour of listening men
Could ne'er in life belong !

But “ Art for Art ! ” the Poet said,
“ 'Tis still the Nightingale,
That sings where no men's feet will tread,
And praise and audience fail.”
●

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

A SONG OF THE FOUR SEASONS

WHEN Spring comes laughing
By vale and hill,
By wind-flower walking
And daffodil,—
Sing stars of morning,
Sing morning skies,
Sing blue of speedwell,—
And my Love's eyes.

When comes the Summer,
Full-leaved and strong,
And gay birds gossip
The orchard long,—
Sing hid, sweet honey
That no bee sips ;
Sing red, red roses,—
And my Love's lips.

When Autumn scatters
The leaves again,
And piled sheaves bury
The broad-wheeled wain,—
Sing flutes of harvest
Where men rejoice ;
Sing rounds of reapers,—
And my Love's voice.

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

But when comes Winter
With hail and storm,
And red fire roaring
And ingle warm,—
Sing first sad going
Of friends that part ;
Then sing glad meeting,—
And my Love's heart.

THE PARADOX OF TIME

THE PARADOX OF TIME

(A VARIATION ON RONSARD)

*“ Le temps s'en va, le temps s'en va, ma dame !
Las ! le temps non : mais NOUS nous en allons ! ”*

TIME goes, you say? Ah no !
Alas, Time stays, *we* go ;
Or else, were this not so,
What need to chain the hours,
For Youth were always ours ?
Time goes, you say?—ah no !

Ours is the eyes' deceit
Of men whose flying feet
 •Lead through some landscape low ;
We pass, and think we see
The earth's fixed surface flee :—
Alas, Time stays,—we go !

Once in the days of old,
Your locks were curling gold,
And mine had shamed the crow.
Now, in the self-same stage,
We've reached the silver age ;
Time goes, you say?—ah no !

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

Once, when my voice was strong,
I filled the woods with song
 To praise your "rose" and "snow";
My bird, that sang, is dead;
Where are your roses fled?
 Alas, Time stays,—we go!

See, in what traversed ways,
What backward Fate delays
 The hopes we used to know;
Where are our old desires?—
Ah, where those vanished fires?
 Time goes, you say?—ah no!

How far, how far, O Sweet,
The past behind our feet
 Lies in the even-glow!
Now, on the forward way,
Let us fold hands, and pray;
 Alas, Time stays,—*we* go!

* TO A GREEK GIRL

TO A GREEK GIRL

WITH breath of thyme and bees that hum,
Across the years you seem to come,—
Across the years with nymph-like head,
And wind-blown brows unfilleted ;
A girlish shape that slips the bud
In lines of unspoiled symmetry ;
A girlish shape that stirs the blood
With pulse of Spring, Autonoë !

Where'er you pass,—where'er you go,
I hear the pebbly rillet flow ;
Where'er you go,—where'er you pass,
There comes a gladness on the grass ;
You bring blithe airs where'er you tread,—
Blithe airs that blow from down and sea ;
You wake in me a Pan not dead,—
Not wholly dead !—Autonoë !

How sweet with you on some green sod
To wreathe the rustic garden-god ;
How sweet beneath the chestnut's shade
With you to weave a basket-braid ;

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

To watch across the stricken chords
Your rosy-twinkling fingers flee ;
To woo you in soft woodland words,
With woodland pipe, Autonoë !

In vain,—in vain ! The years divide :
Where Thamïs rolls a murky tide,
I sit and fill my painful reams,
And see you only in my dreams ;—
A vision, like Alcestis, brought
From under-lands of Memory,—
A dream of Form in days of Thought,—
A dream,—a dream, Autonoë !

THE DEATH OF PROCRIS

THE DEATH OF PROCRIS

A VERSION SUGGESTED BY THE SO-NAMED PICTURE
OF PIERO DI COSIMO, IN THE NATIONAL
GALLERY

PROCRIS the nymph had wedded Cephalus :
He, till the spring had warmed to slow-
winged days
Heavy with June, untired and amorous,
Named her his love; but now, in unknown
ways,
His heart was gone ; and evermore his gaze
Turned from her own, and ever farther ranged
His woodland war ; while she, in dull amaze,
Beholding with the hours her husband changed,
Sighed for his lost caress, by some hard god
estranged.

So, on a day, she rose and found him not.
Alone, with wet, sad eye, she watched the shade
Brighten below a soft-rayed sun that shot
Arrows of light through all the deep-leaved
glade ;
Then, with weak hands, she knotted up the
braid

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

Of her brown hair, and o'er her shoulders cast
Her crimson weed ; with faltering fingers made
Her golden girdle's clasp to join, and past
Down to the trackless wood, full pale and overcast.

And all day long her slight spear devious flew,
And harmless swerved her arrows from their aim,
For ever, as the ivory bow she drew,
Before her ran the still unwounded game.
Then, at the last, a hunter's cry there came,
And, lo, a hart that panted with the chase ;
Thereat her cheek was lightened as with flame,
And swift she gat her to a leafy place,
Thinking, "I yet may chance unseen to see his
face."

Leaping he went, this hunter Cephalus,
Bent in his hand his cornel bow he bare,
Supple he was, round-limbed and vigorous,
Fleet as his dogs, a lean Laconian pair.
He, when he spied the brown of Procris' hair
Move in the covert, deeming that apart
Some fawn lay hidden, loosed an arrow there ;
Nor cared to turn and seek the speeded dart,
Bounding above the fern, fast following up the hart.

But Procris lay among the white wind-flowers,
Shot in the throat. From out the little wound
The slow blood drained, as drops in autumn
showers
Drip from the leaves upon the sodden ground.

THE DEATH OF PROCRIS

None saw her die but Lelaps, the swift hound,
That watched her dumbly with a wistful fear,
Till, at the dawn, the hornèd woodmen found
And bore her gently on a sylvan bier,
To lie beside the sea,—with many an uncouth tear.

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

THE PRAYER OF THE SWINE TO · CIRCE

HUDDLING they came, with shag sides
 caked of mire,—
With hoofs fresh sullied from the troughs o'er-
 turned,—
With wrinkling snouts,—yet eyes in which desire
Of some strange thing unutterably burned,
Unquenchable ; and still where'er She turned
They rose about her, striving each o'er each,
With restless, fierce importuning that yearned
Through those brute masks some piteous tale
 to teach,
Yet lacked the words thereto, denied the power of
 speech.

For these—Eurylochus alone escaping—
In truth, that small exploring band had been,
Whom wise Odysseus, dim precaution shaping,
Ever at heart, of peril unforeseen,
Had sent inland ;—whom then the islet-Queen,—
The fair disastrous daughter of the Sun,—
Had turned to likeness of the beast unclean,
With evil wand transforming one by one
To shapes of loathly swine, imbruted and undone.

THE PRAYER OF THE SWINE TO CIRCE

But "the men's minds remained," and these
for ever
Made hungry supplicance through the fire-red
eyes ;
Still searching aye, with impotent endeavour,
To find, if yet, in any look, there lies
A saving hope, or if they might surprise
In that cold face soft pity's spark concealed,
Which she, still scorning, evermore denies ;
Nor was there in her any ruth revealed
To whom with such mute speech and dumb words
they appealed.

*What hope is ours—what hope ! To find no
mercy
After much war, and many travails done ?—
Ah, kinder far than thy fell philtres, Circe,
The ravening Cyclops and the Læstrigon !
And O, thrice cursèd be Laertes' son,
By whom, at last, we watch the days decline
With no fair ending of the quest begun,
Condemned in sties to weary and to pine,
And with men's hearts to beat through this foul front
of swine !*

*For us not now,—for us, alas ! no more
The old green glamour of the glancing sea ;
For us not now the laughter of the oar,—
The strong-ribbed keel wherein our comrades be ;
Not now, at even, any more shall we,*

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

*By low-browed banks and reedy river places,
Watch the beast hurry and the wild fowl flee ;
Or steering shoreward, in the upland spaces
Have sight of curling smoke and fair-skinned foreign
faces.*

*Alas for us !—for whom the columned houses
We left afore-time, cheerless must abide ;
Cheerless the hearth where now no guest carouses,—
No minstrel raises song at eventide ;
And O, more cheerless than aught else beside,
The wistful hearts with heavy longing full ;—
The wife that watched us on the waning tide,—
The sire whose eyes with weariness are dull,—
The mother whose slow tears fall on the carded wool.*

*If swine we be,—if we indeed be swine,
Daughter of Persé, make us swine indeed,
Well pleased on litter-straw to lie supine,—
Well pleased on mast and acorn-shales to feed,
Stirred by all instincts of the bestial breed ;
But O Unmerciful ! O Pitiless !
Leave us not thus with sick men's hearts to bleed !—
To waste long days in yearning, dumb distress,
And memory of things gone, and utter hopelessness !*

*Leave us at least, if not the things we were,
At least consentient to the thing we be ;
Not hapless doomed to loathe the forms we bear,
And senseful roll in senseless savagery ;
For surely cursed above all cursed are we,*

THE PRAYER OF THE SWINE TO CIRCE

*And surely this the bitterest of ill;—
To feel the old aspirings fair and free,
Become blind motions of a powerless will
Through swine-like frames dispersed to swine-like
issues still.*

*But make us men again, for that thou may'st !
Yea, make us men, Enchantress, and restore
These grovelling shapes, degraded and debased,
To fair embodiments of men once more ;
Yea, by all men that ever woman bore ;
Yea, e'en by him hereafter born in pain,
Shall draw sustainment from thy bosom's core,
O'er whom thy face yet kindly shall remain,
And find its like therein,—make thou us men
again !*

*Make thou us men again,—if men but groping
That dark Hereafter which th' Olympians keep ;
Make thou us men again,—if men but hoping
Behind death's doors security of sleep ;—
For yet to laugh is somewhat, and to weep ;—
To feel delight of living, and to plough
The salt-blown acres of the shoreless deep ;
Better,—yea better far all these than bow
Foul faces to foul earth, and yearn—as we do now !*

So they in speech unsyllabled. But She,
The fair-tressed Goddess, born to be their bane,
Uplifting straight her wand of ivory,
Compelled them groaning to the sties again ;

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

Where they in hopeless bitterness were fain
To rend the oaken woodwork as before,
And tear the troughs in impotence of pain,—
Not knowing, they, that even at the door
Divine Odysseus stood,—as Hermes told of yore.

A CASE OF CAMEOS

A CASE OF CAMEOS

AGATE.

• (*The Power of Love.*)

FIRST, in an Agate-stone, a Centaur strong,
With square man-breasts and hide of dapple
dun,

His brown arms bound behind him with a thong,
On strained croup strove to free himself from one,—
A bolder rider than Bellerophon.

For, on his back, by some strange power of art,
There sat a laughing Boy with bow and dart,
Who drave him where he would, and driving him,
With that barbed toy would make him rear and start.
To this was writ "World-victor" on the rim.

CHALCEDONY.

(*The Thefts of Mercury.*)

THE next in legend bade "Beware of show!"
'Twas graven this on pale Chalcedony.
Here great Apollo, with unbended bow,
His quiver hard by on a laurel tree,
For some new theft was rating Mercury.

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

Who stood with downcast eyes, and feigned distress,
As daring not, for utter guiltiness,
To meet that angry voice and aspect joined.
His very heel-wings drooped ; but yet, not less,
His backward hand the Sun-God's shafts purloined.

SARDONYX.

(The Song of Orpheus.)

THEN, on a Sardonyx, the man of Thrace,
The voice supreme that through Hell's portals stole,
With carved white lyre and glorious song-lit face,
(Too soon, alas ! on Hebrus' wave to roll !)
Played to the beasts, from a great elm-tree bole.
And lo ! with half-shut eyes the leopard spread
His lissome length ; and deer with gentle tread
Came through the trees ; and, from a nearer spring,
The prick-eared rabbit paused ; while overhead
The stock-dove drifted downward, fluttering.

AMETHYST.

(The Crowning of Silenus.)

NEXT came an Amethyst,—the grape in hue.
On a mock throne, by fresh excess disgraced,
With heavy head, and thyrsus held askew,
The Youths, in scorn, had dull Silenus placed,
And o'er him " King of Topers " they had traced.

A CASE OF CAMEOS

Yet but a King of Sleep he seemed at best,
With wine-bag cheeks that bulged upon his breast,
And vat-like paunch distent from his carouse.
Meanwhile, his ass, by no respect repress,
Munched at the wreath upon her Master's brows.

BERYL.

(*The Sirens.*)

LASTLY, with "Pleasure" was a Beryl graven,
Clear-hued, divine. Thereon the Sirens sung.
What time, beneath, by rough rock-bases caven,
And jaw-like rifts where many a green bone clung,
The strong flood-tide, in-rushing, coiled and swung.
Then,—in the offing,—on the lift of the sea,
A tall ship drawing shoreward—helplessly.
For, from the prow, e'en now the rowers leap
Headlong, nor seek from that sweet fate to flee . . .
Ah me, those Women-witches of the Deep!

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

LOVE'S QUEST

(FOR A MURAL PAINTING)

WHENAS the watches of the night had
 grown
 To that deep loneliness where dreams begin,
 I saw how Love, with visage worn and thin,—
With wings close-bound, went through a town
 alone.
Death-pale he showed, and inly seemed to moan
 With sore desire some dolorous place to win;
 Sharp brambles passed had streaked his dazzling
 skin,—
His bright feet eke were gashed with many a stone.
And, as he went, I, sad for piteousness,
 Might see how men from door and gate would
 move
To stay his steps ; or womankind would press,
 With wistful eyes, to balconies above,
And bid him enter in. But Love not less,
 Mournful, kept on his way. Ah ! hapless Love !

THE SICK MAN AND THE BIRDS

THE SICK MAN AND THE BIRDS

ÆGROTUS.

SPRING,—art thou come, O Spring!
I am too sick for words;
How hast thou heart to sing,
O Spring, with all thy birds?

MERULA.

I sing for joy to see again
The merry leaves along the lane,
The little bud grown ripe;
And look, my love upon the bough!
Hark, how she calleth to me now,—
“Pipe! pipe!”

ÆGROTUS.

Ah! weary is the sun:
Love is an idle thing;
But, Bird, thou restless one,
What ails thee, wandering?

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

HIRUNDO.

By shore and sea I come and go
To seek I know not what ; and lo !
 On no man's eaves I sit,
But voices bid me rise once more,
To flit again by sea and shore,—
 Flit ! flit !

ÆGROTUS.

This is Earth's bitter cup :—
 Only to seek, not know.
But Thou, that strivest up,
 Why dost thou carol so ?

ALAUDA.

A secret Spirit gifteth me
With song, and wing that lifteth me,—
 A Spirit for whose sake,
Striving amain to reach the sky,
Still to the old dark earth I cry,—
 “ Wake ! wake !

ÆGROTUS.

My hope hath lost its wing.
 Thou, that to Night dost call,
How hast thou heart to sing
 Thy tears made musical ?

THE SICK MAN AND THE BIRDS

PHILOMELA.

Alas for me ! a dry desire
Is all my song,—a waste of fire
That will not fade nor fail ;
To me, dim shapes of ancient crime
Moan through the windy ways of time,
“ Wail ! wail ! ”

ÆGROTUS.

This is the sick man's song,—
Mournful, in sooth, and fit ;
Unrest that cries “ How long ! ”—
And the Night answers it.

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

A FLOWER SONG OF ANGIOLA

DOWN where the garden grows,
Gay as a banner,
Spake to her mate the Rose
After this manner :—
“ We are the first of flowers,
Plain-land or hilly,
All reds and whites are ours,
Are they not, Lily ? ”

Then to the flowers I spake,—
“ Watch ye my Lady
Gone to the leafy brake,
Silent and shady ;
When I am near to her,
Lily, she knows ;
How I am dear to her,
Look to it, Rose.”

Straightway the Blue-bell stooped,
Paler for pride,
Down where the Violet drooped,
Shy, at her side :—

A FLOWER SONG OF ANGIOLA

“Sweetheart, save me and you,
Where has the summer kist
Flowers of as fair a hue,—
Turkis or Amethyst?”

Therewith I laughed aloud,
Spake on this wise,
“O little flowers so proud,
Have ye seen eyes
Change through the blue in them,—
Change till the mere
Loving that grew in them
Turned to a tear?”

“Flowers, ye are bright of hue,
Delicate, sweet;
Flowers, and the sight of you
Lightens men’s feet;
Yea, but her worth to me,
Flowerets, even,
Sweetening the earth to me,
Sweeteneth heaven.

“This, then, O Flowers, I sing;
God, when He made ye,
Made yet a fairer thing
Making my Lady;—
Fashioned her tenderly,
Giving all weal to her;—
Girdle ye slenderly,
Go to her, kneel to her,—

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

“Saying, ‘He sendeth us,
He the most dutiful,
Meetly he endeth us,
Maiden most beautiful !
Let us get rest of you,
Sweet, in your breast ;—
Die, being prest of you,
Die, being blest.’ ”

A SONG OF ANGIOLA IN HEAVEN

A SONG OF ANGIOLA IN HEAVEN

“Vale, unica!”

FLOWERS,—that have died upon my Sweet,
Lulled by the rhythmic dancing beat
Of her young bosom under you,—
Now will I show you such a thing
As never, through thick buds of Spring,
Betwixt the daylight and the dew,
The Bird whose being no man knows—
The voice that waketh all night through—
Tells to the Rose.

For lo,—a garden-place I found,
Well filled of leaves, and stilled of sound,
Well flowered, with red fruit marvellous ;
And 'twixt the shining trunks would flit
Tall knights and silken maids, or sit
With faces bent and amorous ;—
There, in the heart thereof, and crowned
With woodbine and amaracus,
My Love I found.

Alone she walked,—ah, well I wis,
My heart leapt up for joy of this !—
Then when I called to her her name,—

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

The name, that like a pleasant thing
Men's lips remember, murmuring,
 At once across the sward she came,—
Full fain she seemed, my own dear maid,
 And askèd ever as she came,
 “Where hast thou stayed?”

“Where hast thou stayed?”—she asked as
 though
The long years were an hour ago ;
 But I spake not, nor answerèd,
For, looking in her eyes, I saw,
A light not lit of mortal law ;
 And in her clear cheek's changeless red,
And sweet, unshaken speaking found
 That in this place the Hours were dead,
 And Time was bound.

“This is well done,”—she said,—“in thee,
O Love, that thou art come to me,
 To this green garden glorious ;
Now truly shall our life be sped
In joyance and all goodlihed,
 For here all things are fair to us,
And none with burden is oppressed,
 And none is poor or piteous,—
 For here is Rest.

“No formless Future blurs the sky ;
Men mourn not here, with dull dead eye,
 By shrouded shapes of Yesterday ;

A SONG OF ANGIOLA IN HEAVEN

Betwixt the Coming and the Past
The flawless life hangs fixen fast
In one unwearying To-Day,
That darkens not ; for Sin is shriven,
Death from the doors is thrust away,
And here is Heaven."

At " Heaven " she ceased ;—and lifted up
Her fair head like a flower-cup,
With rounded mouth, and eyes aglow ;
Then set I lips to hers, and felt,—
Ah, God,—the hard pain fade and melt,
And past things change to painted show ;
The song of quiring birds outbroke ;
The lit leaves laughed,—sky shook, and lo,
I swooned,—and woke.

And now, O Flowers,
—Ye that indeed are dead,—
Now for all waiting hours,
Well am I comforted ;
For of a surety, now, I see,
That, without dim distress
Of tears, or weariness,
My Lady, verily, awaiteth me ;
So that until with Her I be,
For my dear Lady's sake
I am right fain to make
Out from my pain a pillow, and to take

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

Grief for a golden garment unto me ;
Knowing that I, at last, shall stand
In that green garden-land,
And, in the holding of my dear Love's hand,
Forget the grieving and the misery.

ANDRÉ LE CHAPELAIN

ANDRÉ LE CHAPELAIN

(*Clèrk of Love*, 1170)

HIS PLAINT TO VENUS OF THE COMING YEARS

*“ Plus ne suis ce que j’ay esté
Et ne le sçaurois jamais estre ;
Mon beau printemps et mon esté
Ont fait le saut par la fenestre.”*

QUEEN VENUS, round whose feet,
To tend thy sacred fire,
With service bitter-sweet
Nor youths nor maidens tire ;—
Goddess, whose bounties be
Large as the un-oared sea ;—

Mother, whose eldest born
First stirred his stammering tongue
In the world’s youngest morn,
When the first daisies sprung :—
Whose last, when Time shall die,
In the same grave shall lie :—

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

Hear thou one suppliant more !

Must I, thy Bard, grow old,
Bent, with the temples frore,
Not jocund be nor bold
To tune for folk in May
Ballad and virelay ?

Shall the youths jeer and jape,
“ Behold his verse doth dote,—
Leave thou Love’s lute to strape,
And tune thy wrinkled throat
To songs of ‘ Flesh is Grass,’ ”—
Shall they cry thus and pass ?

And the sweet girls go by ?
“ Beshrew the grey-beard’s tune !—
What ails his minstrelsy
To sing us snow in June ! ”
Shall they too laugh, and fleet
Far in the sun-warmed street ?

But Thou, whose beauty bright,
Upon thy wooded hill,
With ineffectual light
The wan sun seeketh still ;—
Woman, whose tears are dried,
Hardly, for Adon’s side,—

Have pity, Erycine !
Withhold not all thy sweets ;
Must I thy gifts resign
For Love’s mere broken meats ;

ANDRÉ LE CHAPELAIN

And suit for alms prefer
That was thine Almoner ?

Must I, as bondsman, kneel
That, in full many a cause,
Have scrolled thy just appeal ?
Have I not writ thy Laws ?
*That none from Love shall take
Sage but for Love's sweet sake ;—*

*That none shall aught refuse
To Love of Love's fair dues ;—
That none dear Love shall scoff
Or deem foul shame thereof ;—
That none shall traitor be
To Love's own secrecy ;—*

Avert,—avert it, Queen !
Debarred thy listed sports,
Let me at least be seen
An usher in thy courts,
Outworn, but still indued
With badge of servitude.

When I no more may go,
As one who treads on air,
To string-notes soft and slow,
By maids found sweet and fair—
When I no more may be
Of Love's blithe company ;—

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

When I no more may sit
 Within thine own pleasance,
To weave, in sentence fit,
 Thy golden dalliance ;
When other hands than these
Record thy soft decrees ;—

Leave me at least to sing
 About thine outer wall,
To tell thy pleasuring,
 Thy mirth, thy festival ;
Yea, let my swan-song be
Thy grace, thy sanctity.

[*Here ended André's words :*
 But One, that writeth, saith—
Betwixt his stricken chords
 He heard the Wheels of Death ;
And knew the fruits Love bare
But Dead-Sea apples were.]

THE DYING OF TANNEGUY DU BOIS

THE DYING OF TANNEGUY DU BOIS

*En los nidos de antaño
● No hay pájaros hogaño.*

—SPANISH PROVERB.

YEA, I am passed away, I think, from this ;
Nor helps me herb, nor any leechcraft here,
But lift me hither the sweet cross to kiss,
And witness ye, I go without a fear.
Yea, I am sped, and never more shall see,
As once I dreamed, the show of shield and
crest,
Gone southward to the fighting by the sea ;—
There is no bird in any last year's nest !

Yea, with me now all dreams are done, I ween,
Grown faint and unremembered ; voices call
High up, like misty warders dimly seen
Moving at morn on some Burgundian wall ;
And all things swim—as when the charger stands
Quivering between the knees, and East and
West
Are filled with flash of scarves and waving
hands ;—
There is no bird in any last year's nest !

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

Is she a dream I left in Aquitaine?—

My wife Giselle,—who never spoke a word,
Although I knew her mouth was drawn with pain,
Her eyelids hung with tears; and though I
heard

The strong sob shake her throat, and saw the
cord

' Her necklace made about it ;—she that prest
To watch me trotting till I reached the ford ;—
There is no bird in any last year's nest !

Ah ! I had hoped, God wot,—had longed that
she

Should watch me from the little-lit tourelle,
Me, coming riding by the windy lea—

Me, coming back again to her, Giselle ;
Yea, I had hoped once more to hear him call,
The curly-pate, who, rushen lance in rest, ^{gave}
Stormed at the lilies by the orchard wall ;—
There is no bird in any last year's nest !

But how, my Masters, ye are wrapt in gloom !

This Death will come, and whom he loves he
cleaves

Sheer through the steel and leather ; hating whom

He smites in shameful wise behind the greaves.

'Tis a fair time with Dennis and the Saints,

And weary work to age, and want for rest,
When harness groweth heavy, and one faints,
With no bird left in any last year's nest !

THE DYING OF TANNEGUY DU BOIS

Give ye good hap, then, all. For me, I lie
Broken in Christ's sweet hand, with whom shall
rest

To keep me living, now that I must die ;—
There is no bird in any last year's nest !

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

PALOMYDES

HIM best in all the dim Arthuriad,
Of lovers of fair women, him I prize,—
The Pagan Palomydes. Never glad
Was he with sweetness of his lady's eyes,
Nor joy he had.

But, unloved ever, still must love the same,
And riding ever through a lonely world,
Whene'er on adverse shield or crest he came,
Against the danger desperately hurled,
Crying her name.

So I, who strove to You I may not earn,
Methinks, am come unto so high a place,
That though from hence I can but vainly yearn
For that averted favour of your face,
I shall not turn.

No, I am come too high. Whate'er betide,
To find the doubtful thing that fights with me,
Towards the mountain tops I still shall ride,
And cry your name in my extremity,
As Palomyde,

PALOMYDES

Until the issue come. Will it disclose
No gift of grace, no pity made complete,
After much labour done,—much war with woes?
Will you deny me still in Heaven, my sweet ;—
Ah, Death—who knows?

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

THE MOSQUE OF THE CALIPH

UNTO Seyd the vizier spake the Caliph Abdallah :—

“ Now hearken and hear, I am weary, by Allah ! ;
I am faint with the mere over-running of leisure ;
I will rouse me and rear up a palace to Pleasure ! ”

To Abdallah the Caliph spake Seyd the vizier :
“ All faces grow pale if my Lord draweth near ;
And the breath of his mouth not a mortal shall
scoff it ;—
They must bend and obey, by the beard of the
Prophet ! ”

Then the Caliph that heard, with becoming sedateness,
Drew his hand down *his* beard as he thought of
his greatness ;
Drained out the last bead of the wine in the
chalice :
“ I have spoken, O Seyd ; I will build it, my
palace ! ”

THE MOSQUE OF THE CALIPH

“As a drop from the wine where the wine-cup
hath spilled it,
As a gem from the mine, O my Seyd, I will build it;
Without price, without flaw, it shall stand for a
token
That the word is a law which the Caliph hath
spoken!”

Yet again to the Caliph bent Seyd the vizier :
“Who shall reason or rail if my Lord speaketh
clear?
Who shall strive with his might? Let my Lord
live for ever!
He shall choose him a site by the side of the
river.”

Then the Caliph sent forth unto Kür, unto
Yemen,—
To the South, to the North,—for the skilfullest
freemen;
And soon, in a close, where the river breeze
fanned it,
The basement uprose, as the Caliph had planned it.

Now the courses were laid and the corner-piece
fitted;
And the butments and set-stones were shapen
and knitted,
When lo! on a sudden the Caliph heard frowning,
That the river had swelled, and the workmen were
drowning.

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

Then the Caliph was stirred, and he flushed in his
ire as
He sent forth his word from Teheran to Shiraz ;
And the workmen came new, and the palace,
built faster,
From the bases up-grew unto arch and pilaster.

And the groinings were traced, and the arch-heads
were chasen,
When lo ! in hot haste there came flying a mason,
For a cupola fallen had whelmed half the work-
men ;
And Hamet the chief had been slain by the Turc'-
men.

Then the Caliph's beard curled, and he foamed
in his rage as
Once more his scouts whirled from the Tell to the
Hedjaz ;
" Is my word not my word ? " cried the Caliph
Abdallah ;
" I *will* build it up yet . . . by the *aiding* of
Allah ! "

Though he spoke in his haste like King David
before him,
Yet he felt as he spoke that a something stole o'er
him ;
And his soul grew as glass, and his anger passed
from it
As the vapours that pass from the Pool of Ma-
homet.

THE MOSQUE OF THE CALIPH

And the doom seemed to hang on the palace no longer,
Like a fountain it sprang when the sources feed stronger ;
Shaft, turret, and spire leaped upward, diminished,
Like the flames of a fire,—till the palace was finished !

Without price, without flaw. And it lay on the azure
Like a diadem dropped from an emperor's treasure ;
And the dome of pearl white and the pinnacles fleckless,
Flashed back to the light, like the gems in a necklace.

So the Caliph looked forth on the turret-tops gilded ;
And he said in his pride, "Is my palace not builded ?
Who is more great than I that his word can avail if
My will is my will,"—said Abdallah the Caliph.

But lo ! with the light he repented his scorning,
For an earthquake had shattered the whole ere the morning ;
Of the pearl-coloured dome there was left but a ruin,—
But an arch as a home for the ring-dove to coo in.

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

Shaft, turret, and spire—all were tumbled and
crumbled;
And the soul of the Caliph within him was
humbled;
And he bowed in the dust:—"There is none
great but Allah!
I will build Him a Mosque,"—said the Caliph
Abdallah.

And the Caliph has gone to his fathers for ever,
But the Mosque that he builded shines still by the
river;
And the pilgrims up-stream to this day slacken
sail if
They catch the first gleam of the "Mosque of the
Caliph."

IN THE BELFRY

IN THE BELFRY

WRITTEN UNDER RETHEL'S "DEATH, THE FRIEND"

•
TOLL! Is it night, or daylight yet?
Somewhere the birds seem singing still,
Though surely now the sun has set.

Toll! But who tolls the Bell once more?
He must have climbed the parapet.
Did I not bar the belfry door?

Who can it be?—the Bernardine,
That wont to pray with me of yore?
No,—for the monk was not so lean.

This must be He who, legend saith,
Comes sometimes with a kindlier mien
And tolls a knell.—This shape is Death!

Good-bye, old Bell! So let it be.
How strangely now I draw my breath!
What is this haze of light I see? . . .

IN MANUS TUAS, DOMINE!

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

ARS VICTRIX

(IMITATED FROM THÉOPHILE GAUTIER)

YES; when the ways oppose—
When the hard means rebel,
Fairer the work out-grows,—
More potent far the spell.

O POET, then, forbear
The loosely sandalled verse,
Choose rather thou to wear
The buskin—strait and terse;

Leave to the tyro's hand
The limp and shapeless style;
See that thy form demand
The labour of the file.

SCULPTOR, do thou discard
The yielding clay,—consign
To Paros marble hard
The beauty of thy line;—

ARS VICTRIX

Model thy Satyr's face
For bronze of Syracuse ;
In the veined agate trace
The profile of thy Muse.

PAINTER, that still must mix
But transient tints anew,
Thou in the furnace fix
●The firm enamel's hue ;

Let the smooth tile receive
Thy dove-drawn Erycine ;
Thy Sirens blue at eve
Coiled in a wash of wine.

All passes. ART alone
Enduring stays to us ;
The Bust outlasts the throne,—
The Coin, Tiberius ;

Even the gods must go ;
Only the lofty Rhyme
Not countless years o'erthrow,—
Not long array of time.

Paint, chisel, then, or write ;
But, that the work surpass,
With the hard fashion fight,—
With the resisting mass.

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

“ Autant ici qu’ailleurs ”

*“ At the Sign of the Lyre,”
Good Folk, we present you
With the pick of our quire—
And we hope to content you !*

*Here be Ballad and Song,
The fruits of our leisure,
Some short and some long,—
May they all give you pleasure*

*But if, when you read,
They should fail to restore you,
Farewell, and God-speed—
The world is before you !*

THE LADIES OF ST. JAMES'S

A PROPER NEW BALLAD OF THE COUNTRY AND
THE TOWN

"Phyllida amo ante alias."—VIRG.

THE ladies of St. James's
Go swinging to the play ;
Their footmen run before them,
With a "Stand by ! Clear the way !"
But Phyllida, my Phyllida !
She takes her buckled shoon,
When we go out a-courting
Beneath the harvest moon.

The ladies of St. James's
Wear satin on their backs ;
They sit all night at *Ombre*,
With candles all of wax :
But Phyllida, my Phyllida !
She dons her russet gown,
And runs to gather May dew
Before the world is down.

The ladies of St. James's !
They are so fine and fair,
You'd think a box of essences
Was broken in the air :

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

But Phyllida, my Phyllida !
The breath of heath and furze,
When breezes blow at morning,
Is not so fresh as hers.

The ladies of St. James's !
They're painted to the eyes ;
Their white it stays for ever,
Their red it never dies :
But Phyllida, my Phyllida !
Her colour comes and goes ;
It trembles to a lily,—
It wavers to a rose.

The ladies of St. James's !
You scarce can understand
The half of all their speeches,
Their phrases are so grand :
But Phyllida, my Phyllida !
Her shy and simple words
Are clear as after rain-drops,
The music of the birds.

The ladies of St. James's !
They have their fits and freaks ;
They smile on you—for seconds ;
They frown on you—for weeks :
But Phyllida, my Phyllida !
Come either storm or shine,
From Shrove-tide unto Shrove-tide,
Is always true—and mine.

THE LADIES OF ST. JAMES'S

My Phyllida ! my Phyllida !
I care not though they heap
The hearts of all St. James's,
And give me all to keep ;
I care not whose the beauties
Of all the world may be,
For Phyllida—for Phyllida
Is all the world to me !

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

THE OLD SEDAN CHAIR

*“What’s not destroy’d by Time’s devouring Hand?
Where’s Troy, and where’s the May-Pole in the Strand?”*

—BRAMSTON’S “ART OF POLITICKS.”

IT stands in the stable-yard, under the eaves,
Propped up by a broom-stick and covered
with leaves :

It once was the pride of the gay and the fair,
But now ’tis a ruin,—that old Sedan chair !

It is battered and tattered,—it little avails
That once it was lacquered, and glistened with nails ;
For its leather is cracked into lozenge and square,
Like a canvas by Wilkie,—that old Sedan chair !

See,—here came the bearing-straps ; here were the
holes

For the poles of the bearers—when once there
were poles ;

It was cushioned with silk, it was wadded with
hair,

As the birds have discovered,—that old Sedan
chair !

THE OLD SEDAN CHAIR

“Where’s Troy?” says the poet! Look,—under
the seat,
Is a nest with four eggs,—’tis the favoured retreat
Of the Muscovy hen, who has hatched, I dare swear,
Quite an army of chicks in that old Sedan chair!

And yet—Can’t you fancy a face in the frame
Of the window,—some high-headed damsel or dame,
Be-patched and be-powdered, just set by the stair,
While they raise up the lid of that old Sedan chair!

Can’t you fancy Sir Plume, as beside her he stands,
With his ruffles a-droop on his delicate hands,
With his cinnamon coat, with his laced solitaire,
As he lifts her out light from that old Sedan chair?

Then it swings away slowly. Ah, many a league
It has trotted ’twixt sturdy-legged Terence and
Teague;
Stout fellows!—but prone, on a question of fare,
To brandish the poles of that old Sedan chair!

It has waited by portals where Garrick has played;
It has waited by Heidegger’s “Grand Masquerade”;
For my Lady Codille, for my Lady Bellair,
It has waited—and waited, that old Sedan chair!

Oh, the scandals it knows! Oh, the tales it could tell
Of Drum and Ridotto, of Rake and of Belle,—
Of Cock-fight and Levee, and (scarcely more rare!)
Of Fête-days at Tyburn, that old Sedan chair!

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

"*Heu ! quantum mutata,*" I say as I go.
It deserves better fate than a stable-yard, though !
We must furbish it up, and dispatch it,—“ With
Care,”—
To a Fine-Art Museum—that old Sedan chair !

TO AN INTRUSIVE BUTTERFLY

TO AN INTRUSIVE BUTTERFLY

*“ Kill not—for Pity’s sake—and lest ye slay
The meanest thing upon its upward way.”*

—FIVE RULES OF BUDDHA.

I WATCH you through the garden walks,
I watch you float between
The avenues of dahlia stalks,
And flicker on the green ;
You hover round the garden seat,
You mount, you waver. Why,—
Why storm us in our still retreat,
O saffron Butterfly !

Across the room in loops of flight
I watch you wayward go ;
Dance down a shaft of glancing light,
Review my books a-row ;
Before the bust you flaunt and fit
Of “ blind Mæonides ”—
Ah, trifler, on his lips there lit
Not butterflies, but bees !

You pause, you poise, you circle up
Among my old Japan ;
You find a comrade on a cup,
A friend upon a fan ;

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

You wind anon, a breathing-while,
Around AMANDA'S brow ;—
Dost dream her then, O Volatile !
E'en such an one as thou ?

Away ! Her thoughts are not as thine.
A sterner purpose fills
Her steadfast soul with deep design
Of baby bows and frills ;
What care hath she for worlds without,
What heed for yellow sun,
Whose endless hopes revolve about
A planet, *ætat* One !

Away ! Tempt not the best of wives ;
Let not thy garish wing
Come fluttering our Autumn lives
With truant dreams of Spring !
Away ! Reseek thy "Flowery Land" ;
Be Buddha's law obeyed ;
Lest Betty's undiscerning hand
Should slay . . . a future PRÆD !

THE CURÉ'S PROGRESS

THE CURÉ'S PROGRESS

MONSIEUR the Curé down the street
Comes with his kind old face,—
With his coat worn bare, and his straggling hair,
And his green umbrella-case.

You may see him pass by the little "*Grande Place*,"
And the tiny "*Hôtel-de-Ville*";
He smiles, as he goes, to the *fleuriste* Rose,
And the *pompier* Théophile.

He turns, as a rule, through the "*Marché*" cool,
Where the noisy fish-wives call;
And his compliment pays to the "*Belle Thérèse*,"
As she knits in her dusky stall.

There's a letter to drop at the locksmith's shop,
And Toto, the locksmith's niece,
Has jubilant hopes, for the Curé gropes
In his tails for a *pain d'épice*.

There's a little dispute with a merchant of fruit,
Who is said to be heterodox,
That will ended be with a "*Ma foi, oui!*"
And a pinch from the Curé's box.

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

There is also a word that no one heard
To the furrier's daughter Lou.;
And a pale cheek fed with a flickering red,
And a "*Bon Dieu garde M'sieu !*"

But a grander way for the *Sous-Préfet*,
And a bow for Ma'am'selle Anne ;
And a mock "off-hat" to the Notary's cat,
And a nod to the Sacristan :—

For ever through life the Curé goes
With a smile on his kind old face—
With his coat worn bare, and his straggling hair,
And his green umbrella-case.

THE MASQUE OF THE MONTHS

THE MASQUE OF THE MONTHS

(FOR A FRESCO)

FIRSTLY thou, churl son of Janus,
Rough for cold, in drugget clad,
Com'st with rack and rheum to pain us ;—
Firstly thou, churl son of Janus.
Caverned now is old Sylvanus ;
Numb and chill are maid and lad.

After thee thy dripping brother,
Dank his weeds around him cling ;
Fogs his footsteps swathe and smother,—
After thee thy dripping brother.
Hearth-set couples hush each other,
Listening for the cry of Spring.

Hark ! for March thereto doth follow,
Blithe,—a herald tabarded ;
O'er him flies the shifting swallow,—
Hark ! for March thereto doth follow.
Swift his horn, by holt and hollow,
Wakes the flowers in winter dead.

Thou then, April, Iris' daughter,
Born between the storm and sun ;
Coy as nymph ere Pan hath caught her,—

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

Thou then, April, Iris' daughter.
Now are light, and rustling water ;
Now are mirth, and nests begun.

May the jocund cometh after,
Month of all the Loves (and mine) ;
Month of mock and cuckoo-laughter,—
May the jocund cometh after.
Beaks are gay on roof and rafter ;
Luckless lovers peak and pine.

June the next, with roses scented,
Languid from a slumber-spell ;
June in shade of leafage tented ;—
June the next, with roses scented.
Now her Itys, still lamented,
Sings the mournful Philomel.

Hot July thereafter rages,
Dog-star smitten, wild with heat ;
Fierce as pard the hunter cages,—
Hot July thereafter rages.
Traffic now no more engages ;
Tongues are still in stall and street.

August next, with cider mellow,
Laughs from out the popped corn ;
Hook at back, a lusty fellow,—
August next, with cider mellow.
Now in wains the sheafage yellow
'Twixt the hedges slow is borne.

THE MASQUE OF THE MONTHS

Laden deep with fruity cluster,
Then September, ripe and hale ;
Bees about his basket fluster,—
Laden deep with fruity cluster.
Skies have now a softer lustre ;
Barns resound to flap of flail.

Thou then, too, of woodlands lover,
Dusk October, berry-stained ;
Wailed about of parting plover,—
Thou then, too, of woodlands lover.
Fading now are copse and cover ;
Forests now are sere and waned.

Next November, limping, battered,
Blinded in a whirl of leaf,
Worn of want and travel-tattered,—
Next November, limping, battered.
Now the goodly ships are shattered,
Far at sea, on rock and reef.

Last of all the shrunk December
Cowed for age, in ashen gray ;
Fading like a fading ember,—
Last of all the shrunk December.
Him regarding, men remember
Life and joy must pass away.

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

TWO SERMONS

BETWEEN the rail of woven brass,
That hides the "Strangers' Pew,"
I hear the gray-haired Vicar pass
From Section One to Two.

And somewhere on my left I see—
Whene'er I chance to look—
A soft-eyed, girl St. Cecily,
Who notes them—in a book.

Ah, worthy GOODMAN,—sound divine !
Shall I your wrath incur,
If I admit these thoughts of mine
Will sometimes stray—to her ?

I know your theme, and I revere ;
I hear your precepts tried ;
Must I confess I also hear
A sermon at my side ?

Or how explain this need I feel,—
This impulse prompting me
Within my secret self to kneel
To Faith,—to Purity !

“AU REVOIR”

“AU REVOIR”

A DRAMATIC VIGNETTE

o

SCENE.—*The Fountain in the Garden of the Luxembourg. It is surrounded by Promenaders.*

MONSIEUR JOLICŒUR. A LADY (*unknown*).

M. JOLICŒUR.

'TIS she, no doubt. Brunette,—and tall :
A charming figure, above all !
This promises.—Ahem !

•

THE LADY.

Monsieur ?

Ah ! it is three. Then Monsieur's name
Is JOLICŒUR ? . . .

M. JOLICŒUR.

Madame, the same.

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

THE LADY.

And Monsieur's goodness has to say? .
Your note? . . .

M. JOLICŒUR.

‘Your note.

THE LADY.

Forgive me.—Nay.

(*Reads*)

“*If Madame [I omit] will be
Beside the Fountain-rail at Three,
Then Madame—possibly—may hear
News of her Spaniel.* JOLICŒUR.”
Monsieur denies his note?

M. JOLICŒUR.

I do.

Now let me read the one from you.

“*If Monsieur Jolicœur will be
Beside the Fountain-rail at Three,
Then Monsieur—possibly—may meet
An old Acquaintance.* ‘INDISCREET.’”

THE LADY (*scandalized*).

Ah, what a folly! ’Tis not true.
I never met Monsieur. And you?

“AU REVOIR”

M. JOLICŒUR (*with gallantry*).

Have lived in vain till now. But see :
We are observed.

THE LADY (*looking round*).

I comprehend . . .

(*After a pause.*)

Monsieur, malicious brains combine
For your discomfiture, and mine.
Let us defeat that ill design.
If Monsieur but . . . (*hesitating*).

M. JOLICŒUR (*bowing*).

Rely on me.

THE LADY (*still hesitating*).

Monsieur, I know, will understand . .

M. JOLICŒUR.

Madame, I wait but your command.

THE LADY.

You are too good. Then condescend
At once to be a new-found Friend !

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

M. JOLICŒUR (*entering upon the part forthwith*).

How? I am charmed,—enchanted. Ah!
What ages since we met . . . at *Spa*?

THE LADY (*a little disconcerted*).

At *Ems*, I think. Monsieur, maybe,
Will recollect the Orangery?

M. JOLICŒUR.

At *Ems*, of course. But Madame's face
Might make one well forget a place.

THE LADY.

It seems so. Still, Monsieur recalls
The *Kürhaus*, and the concert-balls?

M. JOLICŒUR.

Assuredly. Though there again
'Tis Madame's image I retain.

THE LADY.

Monsieur is skilled in . . . repartee.
(How do they take it?—Can you see?)

M. JOLICŒUR.

Nay,—Madame furnishes the wit.
(They don't know what to make of it!)

“AU REVOIR”

THE LADY.

And Monsieur's friend who sometimes came? . . .
That clever . . . I forget the name.

M. JOLICŒUR.

The BARON? . . . It escapes me, too.
'Twas doubtless he that Madame knew?

THE LADY (*archly*).

Precisely. But, my carriage waits.
Monsieur will see me to the gates?

M. JOLICŒUR (*offering his arm*).

I shall be charmed. (Your stratagem
Bids fair, I think, to conquer them.)
(*Aside*)

(Who is she? I must find that out.)
—And Madame's husband thrives, no doubt?

THE LADY (*off her guard*).

Monsieur de BEAU—? . . . He died at *Dôle*!

M. JOLICŒUR.

Truly. How sad!

(*Aside.*)

(Yet, on the whole,
How fortunate! BEAU-pré?—BEAU-vau?
Which can it be? Ah, there they go!)
—Madame, your enemies retreat
With all the honours of . . . defeat.

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

THE LADY.

Thanks to Monsieur. Monsieur has shown
A skill PRÉVILLE could not disown.

M. JOLICŒUR.

You flatter me. We need no skill
To act so nearly what we will.
Nay,—what may come to pass, if Fate
And Madame bid me cultivate . . .

THE LADY (*anticipating*).

Alas!—no farther than the gate.
Monsieur, besides, is too polite
To profit by a jest so slight.

M. JOLICŒUR.

Distinctly. Still, I did but glance
At possibilities . . . of Chance.

THE LADY.

Which must not serve Monsieur, I fear,
Beyond the little grating here.

M. JOLICŒUR (*aside*).

(She's perfect. One may push too far,
Piano, sano.)

(*They reach the gates.*)

Here we are.

“AU REVOIR”

Permit me, then . . .

(*Placing her in the carriage.*)

And Madame goes? . . .

Your coachman? . . . Can I? . . .

THE LADY (*smiling*).

Thanks! he knows.

Thanks! Thanks!

M. JOLICŒUR (*insidiously*).

And shall we not renew

Our . . . “*Ems* acquaintanceship”?

THE LADY (*still smiling*).

Adieu!

My thanks instead!

M. JOLICŒUR (*with pathos*).

It is too hard!

(*Laying his hand on the grating.*)

To And one's Paradise is barred!!

THE LADY.

Nay.—“Virtue is her own Reward!”

[*Exit.*

M. JOLICŒUR (*solus*).

BEAU-*vau*?—BEAU-*vallon*?—BEAU-*manoir*?—

But that's a detail!

(*Waving his hand after the carriage.*)

AU REVOIR!

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

THE CARVER AND THE CALIPH

(*WE lay our story in the East.
Because 'tis Eastern? Not the least.
We place it there because we fear
To bring its parable too near,
And seem to touch with impious hand
Our dear, confiding native land.*)

HAROUN ALRASCHID, in the days
He went about his vagrant ways,
And prowled at eve for good or bad
In lanes and alleys of BAGDAD,
Once found, at edge of the bazaar,
E'en where the poorest workers are,
A Carver.

Fair his work and fine
With mysteries of inlaced design,
And shapes of shut significance
To aught but an anointed glance,—
The dreams and visions that grow plain
In darkened chambers of the brain.
And all day busily he wrought
From dawn to eve, but no one bought;—

THE CARVER AND THE CALIPH

Save when some Jew with look askant,
Or keen-eyed Greek from the Levant,
Would pause awhile,—depreciate,—
Then buy a month's work by the weight,
Bearing it swiftly over seas
To garnish rich men's treasures.

And now for long none bought at all,
So lay he sullen in his stall.
Him thus withdrawn the Caliph found,
And smote his staff upon the ground—
“Ho, there, within? Hast wares to sell?
Or slumber'st, having dined too well?”
“‘Dined,’” quoth the man, with sullen eyes,
“How should I dine when no one buys?”
“Nay,” said the other, answering low,—
“Nay, I but jested. Is it so?
Take then this coin, . . . but take beside
A counsel, friend, thou hast not tried.
This craft of thine, the mart to suit,
Is too refined,—remote,—minute;
These small conceptions can but fail;
’Twere best to work on larger scale,
And rather choose such themes as wear
More of the earth and less of air:
The fisherman that hauls his net,—
The merchants in the market set,—
The couriers posting in the street,—
The gossips as they pass and greet,—
These—these are clear to all men's eyes,
Therefore with these they sympathize.
Further (neglect not this advice!)
Be sure to ask three times the price.”

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

The Carver sadly shook his head ;
He knew 'twas truth the Caliph said.
From that day forth his work was planned
So that the world might understand.
He carved it deeper, and more plain ;
He carved it thrice as large again ;
He sold it, too, for thrice the cost ;
—Ah, but the Artist that was lost !

TO AN UNKNOWN BUST

TO AN UNKNOWN BUST IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

"Sermons in stones."

WHO were you once? Could we but guess,
We might perchance more boldly
Define the patient weariness
That sets your lips so coldly;
You "lived," we know, for blame and fame;
But sure, to friend or foeman,
You bore some more distinctive name
Than mere "B. C."—and "Roman"?

Your pedestal should help us much.
Thereon your acts, your title,
(Secure from cold Oblivion's touch!)
Had doubtless due recital;
Vain hope!—not even deeds can last!
That stone, of which you're *minus*,
Maybe with all your virtues past
Endows . . . a TIGELLINUS!

We seek it not; we should not find.
But still, it needs no magic
To tell you wore, like most mankind,
Your comic mask and tragic;

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

And held that things were false and true,
Felt angry or forgiving,
As step by step you stumbled through
This life-long task . . . of living !

You tried the *cul-de-sac* of Thought ;
The *montagne Russe* of Pleasure ;
You found the best Ambition brought
Was strangely short of measure ;
You watched, at last, the fleet days fly,
Till—drowsier and colder—
You felt MERCURIUS loitering by
To touch you on the shoulder.

'Twas then (why not?) the whim would come
That howso Time should garble
'Those deeds of yours when you were dumb,
At least you'd live—in Marble ;
You smiled to think that after days, ,
At least, in Bust or Statue,
(We all have sick-bed dreams !) would gaze,
Not quite incurious, at you.

We gaze ; *we* pity you, be sure !
In truth, Death's worst inaction
Must be less tedious to endure
Than nameless petrification ;
Far better, in some nook unknown,
To sleep for once—and soundly—
Than still survive in wistful stone,
Forgotten more profoundly !

MOLLY TREFUSIS

MOLLY TREFUSIS

*“ Now the Graces are four and the Venuses two,
And ten is the number of Muses;
For a Muse and a Grace and a Venus are you,—
My dear little Molly Trefusis ! ”*

SO he wrote, the old bard of an “old Magazine”:
As a study it not without use is,
If we wonder a moment who she may have been,
This same “little Molly Trefusis !”

She was Cornish. We know that at once by the
“Tre”;
Then of guessing it scarce an abuse is
If we say that where Bude bellows back to the sea
Was the birthplace of Molly Trefusis.

And she lived in the era of patches and bows,
Not knowing what rouge or ceruse is;
For they needed (I trust) but her natural rose,
The lilies of Molly Trefusis.

And I somehow connect her (I frankly admit
That the evidence hard to produce is)
With BATH in its hey-day of Fashion and Wit,—
This dangerous Molly Trefusis.

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

I fancy her, radiant in ribbon and knot,
(How charming that old-fashioned puce is !)
All blooming in laces, fal-lals, and what not,
At the PUMP ROOM,—Miss Molly Trefusis.

I fancy her reigning,—a Beauty,—a Toast,—
Where BLADUD'S medicinal cruse is ;
And we know that at least of one Bard it could
boast,—
The Court of Queen Molly Trefusis.

He says she was "VENUS." I doubt it. Beside,
(Your rhymer so hopelessly loose is !)
His "little" could scarce be to Venus applied,
If fitly to Molly Trefusis.

No, no. It was HEBE he had in his mind ;
And fresh as the handmaid of Zeus is,
And rosy, and rounded, and dimpled—you'll find—
Was certainly Molly Trefusis !

Then he calls her "a MUSE." To the charge I
reply
That we all of us know what a Muse is ;
It is something too awful,—too acid,—too dry,—
For sunny-eyed Molly Trefusis.

But "a GRACE." There I grant he was probably
right ;
(The rest but a verse-making ruse is)
It was all that was graceful,—intangible,—light,—
The beauty of Molly Trefusis !

MOLLY TREFUSIS.

Was she wooed? Who can hesitate much about
that

Assuredly more than obtuse is ;
For how could the poet have written so pat
“ My dear little Molly Trefusis ! ”

And was wed? That I think we must plainly
infer,

Since of suitors the common excuse is
To take to the Wives. So it happened to her,
Of course,—“ little Molly Trefusis ! ”

To the Bard? 'Tis unlikely. Apollo, you see,
In practical matters a goose is ;—
'Twas a Knight of the Shire, and a hunting J.P.,
Who carried off Molly Trefusis !

And you'll find, I conclude, in the “ *Gentleman's
Mag.*,”

At the end, where the pick of the news is,
“ *On the (blank), at 'the Bath,' to Sir Hilary
Bragg,*
With a Fortune, MISS MOLLY TREFUSIS.”

Thereupon . . . But no farther the student may pry
Love's temple is dark as Eleusis ;
So here, at the threshold we part, you and I,
From “ dear little Molly Trefusis.”

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

AT THE CONVENT GATE

WISTARIA blossoms trail and fall
Above the length of barrier wall ;
And softly, now and then,
The shy, staid-breasted doves will flit
From roof to gateway-top, and sit
And watch the ways of men.

The gate's ajar. If one might peep !
Ah, what a haunt of rest and sleep
The shadowy garden seems !
And note how dimly to and fro
The grave, gray-hooded Sisters go ;
Like figures seen in dreams.

Look, there is one that tells her beads ;
And yonder one apart that reads
A tiny missal's page ;
And see, beside the well, the two
That, kneeling, strive to lure anew
The magpie to its cage !

Not beautiful—not all ! But each
With that mild grace, outlying speech,
Which comes of even mood ;—

AT THE CONVENT GATE

The Veil unseen that women wear
With heart-whole thought, and quiet care,
And hope of higher good.

“ A placid life—a peaceful life !
What need to these the name of Wife ?
What gentler task (I said)—
What worthier—e’en your arts among—
Than tend the sick, and teach the young,
And ‘give the hungry bread ? ”

“ No worthier task ! ” re-echoes She,
Who (closelier clinging) turns with me
To face the road again :
—And yet, in that warm heart of hers,
She means the doves’, for she prefers
To “ watch the ways of men.”

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

THE MILKMAID

A NEW SONG* TO AN OLD TUNE

ACROSS the grass I see her pass ;
She comes with tripping pace,—
A maid I know,—and March winds blow
Her hair across her face ;—
With a hey, Dolly ! ho, Dolly !
Dolly shall be mine,
Before the spray is white with May,
Or blooms the eglantine.

The March winds blow. I watch her go :
Her eye is brown and clear ;
Her cheek is brown, and soft as down,
(To those who see it near !)—
With a hey, Dolly ! ho, Dolly !
Dolly shall be mine,
Before the spray is white with May,
Or blooms the eglantine.

What has she not that those have got,—
The dames that walk in silk !
If she undo her 'kerchief blue,
Her neck is white as milk.

THE MILKMAID

With a hey, Dolly ! ho, Dolly !
Dolly shall be mine,
Before the spray is white with May,
Or blooms the eglantine.

Let those who will be proud and chill !
For me, from June to June,
My Dolly's words are sweet as curds—
Her laugh is like a tune ;—
With a hey, Dolly ! ho, Dolly !
Dolly shall be mine,
Before the spray is white with May,
Or blooms the eglantine.

Break, break to hear, O crocus-spear !
O tall Lent-lilies flame !
There'll be a bride at Easter-tide,
And Dolly is her name.
With a hey, Dolly ! ho, Dolly !
Dolly shall be mine,
Before the spray is white with May,
• Or blooms the eglantine.

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

AN OLD FISH POND

GREEN growths of mosses drop and bead
 Around the granite brink;
And 'twixt the isles of water-weed
 The wood-birds dip and drink.

Slow efts about the edges sleep;
 Swift-darting water-flies
Shoot on the surface; down the deep
 Fast-following bubbles rise.

Look down. What groves that scarcely sway!
 What "wood obscure," profound!
What jungle!—where some beast of prey
 Might choose his vantage-ground!

.

Who knows what lurks beneath the tide?—
 Who knows what tale? Belike,
Those "antres vast" and shadows hide
 Some patriarchal Pike;—

Some tough old tyrant, wrinkle-jawed,
 To whom the sky, the earth,
Have but for aim to look on awed
 And see him wax in girth;—

AN OLD FISH POND

Hard ruler there by right of might ;
An ageless Autocrat,
Whose "good old rule" is "Appetite,
And subjects fresh and fat ;"—

While they—poor souls !—in wan despair
Still watch for signs in him ;
And dying, hand from heir to heir
The day undawned and dim,

When the pond's terror too must go ;
Or creeping in by stealth,
Some bolder brood, with common blow,
Shall found a Commonwealth.

Or say,—perchance the liker this !—
That these themselves are gone ;
That Amurath *in minimis*,—
Still hungry,—lingers on,

With dwindling trunk and wolfish jaw
Revolving sullen things,
But most the blind unequal law
That rules the food of Kings ;—

The blot that makes the cosmic All
A mere time-honoured cheat ;—
That bids the Great to eat the Small,
Yet lack the Small to eat !

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

Who knows ! Meanwhile the mosses bead
 Around the granite brink ;
And 'twixt the isles of water-weed
 The wood-birds dip and drink.

AN EÁSTERN APOLOGUE

AN EASTERN APOLOGUE

(TO E. H. P.)

MELIK the Sultán, tired and wan,
Nodded at noon on his diván.

Beside the fountain lingered near
JAMÍL the bard, and the vizier—

Old YÚSUF, sour and hard to please ;
Then JAMÍL sang, in words like these.

*Slim is Butheina—slim is she
As boughs of the Aráka tree !*

“Nay,” quoth the other, teeth between,
“Lean, if you will,—I call her lean.”

*Sweet is Butheina—sweet as wine,
With smiles that like red bubbles shine !*

“True,—by the Prophet !” YÚSUF said.
“She makes men wander in the head !”

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

*Dear is Butheina—ah ! more dear
Than all the maidens of Kashmeer !*

“ Dear,” came the answer, quick as thought,
“ Dear . . and yet always to be bought.”

So JAMÍL ceased. But still Life's page
Shows diverse untò YOUTH and AGE :

And—be the song of ghouls or gods—
TIME, like the Sultán, sits . . and nods.

TO A MISSAL

TO A MISSAL OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

MISSAL of the Gothic age,
Missal with the blazoned page,
Whence, O Missal, hither come,
From what dim scriptorium ?

Whose the name that wrought thee thus,
Ambrose or Theophilus,
Bending, through the waning light,
O'er thy vellum scraped and white ;

Weaving 'twixt thy rubric lines
Sprays and leaves and quaint designs ;
Setting round thy border scrolled
Buds of purple and of gold ?

Ah !—a wondering brotherhood,
Doubtless, by that artist stood,
Raising o'er his careful ways
Little choruses of praise ;

Glad when his deft hand would paint
Strife of Sathanas and Saint,
Or in secret coign entwist
Jest of cloister humourist.

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

Well the worker earned his wage,
Bending o'er the blazoned page!
Tired the hand and tired the wit
Ere the final *Explicit*!

Not as ours the books of old—
Things that steam can stamp and fold;
Not as ours the books of yore—
Rows of type, and nothing more.

Then a book was still a Book,
Where a wistful man might look,
Finding something through the whole,
Beating,—like a human soul.

In that growth of day by day,
When to labour was to pray,
Surely something vital passed
To the patient page at last;

Something that one still perceives
Vaguely present in the leaves;
Something from the worker lent;
Something mute—but eloquent!

A REVOLUTIONARY RELIC

A REVOLUTIONARY RELIC

OLD it is, and worn and battered,
As I lift it from the stall;
And the leaves are frayed and tattered,
And the pendent sides are shattered,
Pierced and blackened by a ball.

'Tis the tale of grief and gladness
Told by sad St. Pierre of yore,
That in front of France's madness
Hangs a strange seductive sadness,
Grown pathetic evermore.

And a perfume round it hovers,
Which the pages half reveal,
For a folded corner covers,
Interlaced, two names of lovers,—
A "Savignac" and "Lucile."

As I read I marvel whether,
In some pleasant old château,
Once they read this book together,
In the scented summer weather,
With the shining Loire below?

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

Nooked—secluded from espial,
Did Love slip and snare them so,
While the hours danced round the dial
To the sound of flute and viol,
In that pleasant old château?

Did it happen that no single
Word of mouth could either speak?
Did the brown and gold hair mingle,
Did the shamed skin thrill and tingle
To the shock of cheek and cheek?

Did they feel with that first flushing
Some new sudden power to feel,
Some new inner spring set gushing
At the names together rushing
Of "Savignac" and "Lucile"?

Did he drop on knee before her—
" *Son Amour, son Cœur, sa Reine* "—
In his high-flown way adore her,
Urgent, eloquent implore her,
Plead his pleasure and his pain?

Did she turn with sight swift-dimming,
And the quivering lip we know,
With the full, slow eyelid brimming,
With the languorous pupil swimming,
Like the love of Mirabeau?

A REVOLUTIONARY RELIC

Stretch her hand from cloudy frilling,
For his eager lips to press ;
In a flash all fate fulfilling
Did he catch her, trembling, thrilling—
Crushing life to one caress ?

Did they sit in that dim sweetness
Of attained love's after-calm,
Marking not the world—its meetness,
Marking Time not—nor his fleetness,
Only happy, palm to palm ?

Till at last she,—sunlight smiting
Red on wrist and cheek and hair,—
Sought the page where love first lighting,
Fixed their fate, and, in this writing,
Fixed the record of it there.

Did they marry midst the smother,
Shame and slaughter of it all ?
Did she wander like that other
Woful, wistful, wife and mother,
Round and round his prison wall ;—

Wander wailing, as the plover
Waileth, wheeleth, desolate,
Heedless of the hawk above her,
While as yet the rushes cover,
Waning fast, her wounded mate ;—

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

Wander, till his love's eyes met hers,
Fixed and wide in their despair?
Did he burst his prison fetters,
Did he write sweet, yearning letters
 "*À Lucile,—en Angleterre*" ?

Letters where the reader, reading,
Halts him with 'a sudden stop,
For he feels a man's heart bleeding,
Draining out its pain's exceeding—
Half a life, at every drop :

Letters where Love's iteration
Seems to warble and to rave ;
Letters where the pent sensation
Leaps to lyric exultation,
Like a song-bird from a grave.

Where, through Passion's wild repeating,
Peep the Pagan and the Gaul,
Politics and love competing,
Abelard and Cato greeting,
Rousseau ramping over all.

Yet your critic's right—you waive it,
Whirled along the fever-flood ;
And its touch of truth shall save it,
And its tender rain shall lave it,
For at least you read *Amavit*,
Written there in tears of blood.

A REVOLUTIONARY RELIC

Did they hunt him to his hiding,
Tracking traces in the snow?
Did they tempt him out, confiding,
Shoot him ruthless down, deriding,
By the ruined old château?

Left to lie, with thin lips resting
Frozen to a smile of scorn,
Just the bitter thought's suggesting,
At this excellent new jesting
Of the rabble Devil-born.

Till some "tiger-monkey," finding
These few words the covers bear,
Some swift rush of pity blinding,
Sent them in the shot-pierced binding
"À Lucile, en Angleterre."

.
Fancies only! Nought the covers,
Nothing more the leaves reveal,
Yet I love it for its lovers,
For the dream that round it hovers
Of "Savignac" and "Lucile."

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

A MADRIGAL.

BEFORE me, careless lying,
Young Love his ware comes crying ;
Full soon the elf untreasures
His pack of pains and pleasures,—
 With roguish eye,
 He bids me buy
From out his pack of treasures.

His wallet's stuffed with blisses,
With true-love-knots and kisses,
With rings and rosy fetters,
And sugared vows and letters ;—
 He holds them out
 With boyish flout,
And bids me try the fetters.

Nay, Child (I cry), I know them ;
There's little need to show them !
Too well for new believing
I know their past deceiving,—
 I am too old
 (I say), and cold,
To-day, for new believing !

A MADRIGAL

But still the wanton presses,
With honey-sweet caresses,
And still, to my undoing,
He wins me, with his wooing,
 To buy his ware
 With all its care,
Its sorrow and undoing.

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

A SONG TO THE LUTE

WHEN first I came to Court,
 Fa la !

When first I came to Court,
I deemed Dan Cupid but a boy,
And Love an idle sport,
A sport whereat a man might toy
With little hurt and mickle joy—
When first I came to Court !

Too soon I found my fault,
 Fa la !

Too soon I found my fault ;
The fairest of the fair brigade
Advanced to mine assault.
Alas ! against an adverse maid
Nor fosse can serve nor palisade—
Too soon I found my fault !

When SILVIA's eyes assail,
 Fa la !

When SILVIA's eyes assail,
No feint the arts of war can show,
No counterstroke avail ;
Naught skills but arms away to throw,
And kneel before that lovely foe,
When SILVIA's eyes assail !

A SONG TO THE LUTE

Yet is all truce in vain,
Fa la !

Yet is all truce in vain,
Since she that spares doth still pursue
To vanquish once again ;
And naught remains for man to do
But fight once more, to yield anew,
And so all truce is vain !

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

A GARDEN SONG

(TO W. E. H.)

HERE, in this sequestered close,
Bloom the hyacinth and rose ;
Here beside the modest stock
Flaunts the flaring hollyhock ;
Here, without a pang, one sees
Ranks, conditions, and degrees.

All the seasons run their race
In this quiet resting place ;
Peach, and apricot, and fig
Here will ripen, and grow big ;
Here is store and overplus,—
More had not Alcinoüs !

Here, in alleys cool and green,
Far ahead the thrush is seen ;
Here along the southern wall
Keeps the bee his festival ;
All is quiet else—afar
Sounds of toil and turmoil are.

A^d GARDEN SONG

Here be shadows large and long ;
Here be spaces meet for song ;
Grant, O garden-god, that I,
Now that none profane is nigh,—
Now that mood and moment please,—
Find the fair Pierides !

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

A CHAPTER OF FROISSART

(GRANDPAPA LOQUITUR)

YOU don't know Froissart now, young folks.
This age, I think, prefers recitals
Of high-spiced crime, with "slang" for jokes,
And startling titles ;

But, in my time, when still some few
Loved "old Montaigne," and praised Pope's
Homer
(Nay, thought to style him "poet" too,
Were scarce misnomer),

Sir John was less ignored. Indeed,
I can recall how Some-one present
(Who spoils her grandson, Frank !) would read,
And find him pleasant ;

For,—by this copy,—hangs a Tale.
Long since, in an old house in Surrey,
Where men knew more of "morning ale"
Than "Lindley Murray,"

A CHAPTER OF FROISSART

In a dim-lighted, whip-hung hall,
 'Neath Hogarth's "Midnight Conversation,"
It stood ; and oft 'twixt spring and fall,
 With fond elation,

I turned the brown old leaves. For there
 All through one hopeful happy summer,
At such a page (I well knew where),
 Some secret comer,

Whom I can picture, 'Trix, like you
 (Though scarcely such a colt unbroken),
Would sometimes place for private view
 A certain token ;—

A rose-leaf, meaning "Garden Wall,"
 An ivy-leaf for "Orchard corner,"
A thorn to say "Don't come at all,"—
 Unwelcome warner !—

Not that, in truth, our friends gainsaid ;
 But then Romance required dissembling,
(Ann Radcliffe taught us that !) which bred
 Some genuine trembling ;

Though, as a rule, all used to end
 In such kind confidential parley
As may to you kind Fortune send,
 You long-legged Charlie,

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

When your time comes. How years slip on !

We had our crosses like our betters ;
Fate sometimes looked askance upon
Those floral letters ;

And once, for three long days disdained,
The dust upon the folio settled ;
For some-one, in the right, was pained,
And some-one nettled,

That sure was in the wrong, but spake
Of fixed intent and purpose stony
To serve King George, enlist and make
Minced-meat of " Boney,"

Who yet survived—ten years at least.
And so, when she I mean came hither,
One day that need for letters ceased,
She brought this with her !

Here is the leaf-stained Chapter :—*How*
The English King laid siege to Calais ;
I think Gran. knows it even now,—
Go ask her, Alice.

TO THE MAMMOTH-TORTOISE

TO THE MAMMOTH-TORTOISE

OF THE MASCARENE ISLANDS

*“Tuque, Testudo, resonare septem
Gallida nervis.”*

—HOR. iii. II.

MONSTER Chelonian, you suggest
To some, no doubt, the calm,—
The torpid ease of islets drest
In fan-like fern and palm ;

To some your cumbrous ways, perchance,
Darwinian dreams recall ;
And some your Rip-van-Winkle glance,
And ancient youth appal ;

So widely varied views dispose :
But not so mine,—for me
Your vasty vault but simply shows
A LYRE immense, *per se*,

A LYRE to which the Muse might chant
A truly “Orphic tale,”
Could she but find that public want,
A Bard—of equal scale !

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

Oh, for a Bard of awful words,
And lungs serenely strong,
To sweep from your sonorous chords
Niagaras of song,

Till, dinned by that tremendous strain,
The grovelling world aghast,
Should leave its paltry greed of gain,
And mend its ways . . . at last !

A ROMAN ROUND-ROBIN

A ROMAN ROUND-ROBIN

(“HIS FRIENDS” TO QUINTUS HORATIUS FLACCUS)

“*Hæc decies repetita [non] placebit.*”—ARS POETICA.

FLACCUS, you write us charming songs :
No bard we know possesses
In such perfection what belongs
To brief and bright addresses ;

No man can say that Life is short
With mien so little fretful ;
No man to Virtue's paths exhort
In phrases less regretful ;

Or touch, with more serene distress,
On Fortune's ways erratic ;
And then delightfully digress
From Alp to Adriatic :

All this is well, no doubt, and tends
Barbarian minds to soften ;
But, HORACE—we, we are your friends—
Why tell *us* this so often ?

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

Why feign to spread a cheerful feast,
And then thrust in our faces
These barren scraps (to say the least)
Of Stoic common-places ?

Recount, and welcome, your pursuits :
Sing Lydē's lyre and hair ;
Sing drums and Berecynthian flutes ;
Sing parsley-wreaths ; but spare,—

O, spare to sing, what none deny,
That things we love decay ;
That Time and Gold have wings to fly ;—
That all must Fate obey !

Or bid us dine—on this day week—
And pour us, if you can,
As soft and sleek as girlish cheek,
Your inmost Cæcuban ;—

Of that we fear not overplus ;
But your didactic 'tap'—
Forgive us !—grows monotonous ;
Nunc vale ! Verbum sap.

VERSES TO ORDER

VERSES TO ORDER

(FOR A DRAWING BY E. A. ABBEY)

HOW weary 'twas to wait ! The year
Went dragging slowly on ;
The red leaf to the running brook
Dropped sadly, and was gone ;
December came, and locked in ice
The plashing of the mill ;
The white snow filled the orchard up ;
But she was waiting still.

Spring stirred and broke. The rooks once more
'Gan cawing in the loft ;
The young lambs' new-awakened cries
Came trembling from the croft ;
The clumps of primrose filled again
The hollows by the way ;
The pale wind-flowers blew ; but she
Grew paler still than they.

How weary 'twas to wait ! With June,
Through all the drowsy street,
Came distant murmurs of the war,
And rumours of the fleet ;

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

The gossips, from the market-stalls,
Cried news of Joe and Tim ;
But June shed all her leaves, and still
There came no news of him.

And then, at last, at last, at last,
One blessèd August morn,
Beneath the yellowing autumn elms,
Pang-panging came the horn ;
The swift coach paused a creaking-space,
Then flashed away, and passed ;
But she stood trembling yet, and dazed :
The news had come—at last !

And thus the artist saw her stand,
While all around her seems
As vague and shadowy as the shapes
That flit from us in dreams ;
And naught in all the world is true,
Save those few words which tell
That he she lost is found again—
Is found again—and well !

A LEGACY

A LEGACY

AH, Postumus, we all must go :
This keen North-Easter nips my shoulder ;
My strength begins to fail ; I know
You find me older ;

I've made my Will. Dear, faithful friend—
My Muse's friend and not my purse's !
Who still would hear and still commend
My tedious verses,—

How will you live—of these deprived ?
I've learned your candid soul. The venal,—
The sordid friend had scarce survived
A test so penal ;

But you—Nay, nay, 'tis so. The rest
Are not as you : you hide your merit ;
You, more than all, deserve the best
True friends inherit ;—

Not gold,—that hearts like yours despise ;
Not “spacious dirt” (your own expression),
No ; but the rarer, dearer prize—
The Life's Confession !

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

You catch my thought? What! Can't you
guess?

You, you alone, admired my Cantos;—
I've left you, P., my whole MS.,
In three portmanteaus!

‘LITTLE BLUE-RIBBONS’

“LITTLE BLUE-RIBBONS”

“**L**ITTLE Blue-Ribbons!” We call her that
From the ribbons she wears in her favourite
hat;

For may not a person be only five,
And yet have the neatest of taste alive?—
As a matter of fact, this one has views
Of the strictest sort as to frocks and shoes;
And we never object to a sash or bow,
When “little Blue-Ribbons” prefers it so.

“Little Blue-Ribbons” has eyes of blue,
And an arch little mouth, when the teeth peep
through;
And her primitive look is wise and grave,
With a sense of the weight of the word “behave”;
Though now and again she may condescend
To a radiant smile for a private friend;
But to smile for ever is weak, you know,
And “little Blue-Ribbons” regards it so.

She’s a staid little woman! And so as well
Is her ladyship’s doll, “Miss Bonnibelle”;
But I think what at present the most takes up
The thoughts of her heart is her last new cup;

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

For the object thereon,—be it understood,—
Is the “Robin that buried the ‘Babes in the
Wood’”—

It is not in the least like a robin, though,
But “little Blue-Ribbons” declares it so.

“Little Blue-Ribbons” believes, I think,
That the rain comes down for the birds to drink ;
Moreover, she holds, in a cab you’d get
To the spot where the suns of yesterday set ;
And I know that she fully expects to meet
With a lion or wolf in Regent Street !
We may smile, and deny as we like—But, no ;
For “little Blue-Ribbons” still dreams it so.

Dear “little Blue-Ribbons” ! She tells us all
That she never intends to be “great” and “tall” ;
(For how could she ever contrive to sit
In her “own, own, chair,” if she grew one bit !)
And, further, she says, she intends to stay
In her “darling home” till she gets “quite gray” ;
Alas ! we are gray ; and we doubt, you know,
But “little Blue-Ribbons” will have it so !

LINES TO A STUPID PICTURE

LINES TO A STUPID PICTURE

*"—the music of the moon
Sleeps in the plain eggs of the nightingale."*

•

—AYLMER'S FIELD.

FIVE geese,—a landscape damp and wild,—
A stunted, not too pretty, child,
Beneath a battered gingham ;
Such things, to say the least, require
A Muse of more-than-average Fire
Effectively to sing 'em.

And yet—Why should they ? Souls of mark
Have sprung from such ;—e'en Joan of Arc
Had scarce a grander duty ;
Not always ('tis a maxim trite)
From righteous sources comes the right,—
From beautiful, the beauty.

Who shall decide where seed is sown ?
Maybe some priceless germ was blown
To this unwholesome marish ;
(And what must grow will still increase,
Though cackled round by half the geese
And ganders in the parish.)

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

Maybe this homely face may hide
A Staël before whose mannish pride
Our frailer sex shall tremble ;
Perchance this audience anserine
May hiss (O fluttering Muse of mine!)—
May hiss—a future Kemble !

Or say the gingham shadows o'er
An undeveloped Hannah More!—
A latent Mrs. Trimmer!!
Who shall affirm it?—who deny?—
Since of the truth nor you nor I
Discern the faintest glimmer?

So then—Caps off, my Masters all ;
Reserve your final word,—recall
Your all-too-hasty strictures ;
Caps off, I say, for Wisdom sees
Undreamed potentialities
In most unhopeful pictures.

A FAIRY TALE

A FAIRY TALE

*“ On court, hélas ! après la vérité ;
Ah ! croyez-moi, l'erreur a son mérite.”*

—VOLTAIRE.

CURLED in a maze of dolls and bricks,
I find Miss Mary, *ætat* six,
Blonde, blue-eyed, frank, capricious,
Absorbed in her first fairy book,
From which she scarce can pause to look,
Because it's “so delicious !”

“Such marvels, too. A wondrous Boat,
In which they cross a magic Moat,
That's smooth as glass to row on—
A Cat that brings all kinds of things ;
And see, the Queen has angel wings—
Then OGRE comes ”—and so on.

What trash it is ! How sad to find
(Dear Moralist !) the childish mind,
So active and so pliant,
Rejecting themes in which you mix
Fond truths with pleasing facts, to fix
On tales of Dwarf and Giant !

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

In merest prudence men should teach
That cats mellifluous in speech
Are painful contradictions ;
That science ranks as monstrous things
Two pairs of upper limbs ; so wings—
E'en angels' wings !—are fictions ;

That there's no giant now but Steam ;
That life, although "an empty dream,"
Is scarce a "land of Fairy."
"Of course I said all this ?" Why, no ;
I *did* a thing far wiser, though,—
I read the tale with Mary.

TO A CHILD

TO A CHILD

(FROM THE "GARLAND OF RACHEL")

•

HOW shall I sing you, Child, for whom
So many lyres are strung ;
Or how the only tone assume
That fits a Maid so young ?

What rocks there are on either hand !
Suppose—'tis on the cards—
You should grow up with quite a grand
Platonic hate for bards !

How shall I then be shamed, undone,
For ah ! with what a scorn
Your eyes must greet that luckless One
Who rhymed you, newly born,—

Who o'er your "helpless cradle" bent,
His idle verse to turn ;
And twanged his tiresome instrument
Above your unconcern !

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

Nay,—let my words be so discreet,
That, keeping Chance in view,
Whatever after fate you meet
A part may still be true.

Let others wish you mere good looks,—
Your sex is always fair ;
Or to be writ in Fortune's books,—
She's rich who has to spare :

I wish you but a heart that's kind,
A head that's sound and clear ;
(Yet let the heart be not too blind,
The head not too severe !)

A joy of life, a frank delight ;
A not-too-large desire ;
And—if you fail to find a Knight—
At least . . . a trusty Squire.

HOUSEHOLD ART

HOUSEHOLD ART

“ **M**INE be a cot,” for the hours of play,
Of the kind that is built by Miss GREEN-
AWAY ;

Where the walls are low, and the roofs are red,
And the birds are gay in the blue o’erhead ;
And the dear little figures, in frocks and frills,
Go roaming about at their own sweet wills,
And “play with the pups,” and “reprove the
calves,”

And do nought in the world (but Work) by halves,
From “ Hunt’ the Slipper ” and “ Riddle-me-ree ”
To watching the cat in the apple-tree.

O Art of the Household ! Men may prate
Of their ways “ intense ” and Italianate,—
They may soar on their wings of sense, and float
To the *au delà* and the dim remote,—
Till the last sun sink in the last-lit West,
’Tis the Art at the Door that will please the best ;
To the end of Time ’twill be still the same,
For the Earth first laughed when the children
came !

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

THE DISTRESSED POET

A SUGGESTION FROM HOGARTH

ONE knows the scene so well,—a touch,
A word, brings back again
That room, not garnished overmuch,
In gusty Drury Lane ;

The empty safe, the child that cries,
The kittens on the coat,
The good-wife with her patient eyes,
The milkmaid's tuneless throat ;

And last, in that mute woe sublime,
The luckless verseman's air :
The "Bysshe," the foolscap and the rhyme,—
The Rhyme . . . that is not there !

Poor Bard ! to dream the verse inspired—
With dew's Castalian wet—
Is built from cold abstractions squired
By "Bysshe," his epithet !

THE "DISTRESSED POET"

Ah ! when she comes, the glad-eyed Muse,
No step upon the stair
Betrays the guest that none refuse,—
She takes us unaware ;

And tips with fire our lyric lips,
And sets our hearts a-flame,
And then, like Ariel, off she trips,
And none know how she came.

Only, henceforth, for right or wrong,
By some dull sense grown keen,
Some blank hour blossomed into song,
We feel that she has been.

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

JOCOSA LYRA

IN our hearts is the Great One of Avon
Engraven,⁶
And we climb the cold summits once built on
By Milton.

But at times not the air that is rarest
Is fairest,
And we long in the valley to follow
Apoño.

Then we drop from the heights atmospheric
To Herrick,
Or we pour the Greek honey, grown blander,
Of Landor ;

Or our cosiest nook in the shade is
Where Praed is,
Or we toss the light bells of the mocker
With Locker.

Oh, the song where not one of the Graces
Tight-laces,—
Where we woo the sweet Muses not starchly,
But archly,—

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

MY BOOKS

THEY dwell in the odour of camphor,
They stand in a Sheraton shrine,
They are "warranted early editions,"
These worshipful tomes of mine ;—

In their creamiest "Oxford vellum,"
In their redolent "crushed Levant,"
With their delicate watered linings,
They are jewels of price, I grant ;—

Blind-tooled and morocco-jointed,
They have Zaehnsdorf's daintiest dress,
They are graceful, attenuate, polished,
But they gather the dust, no less ;—

For the row that I prize is yonder,
Away on the unglazed shelves,
The bulged and the bruised *octavos*,
The dear and the dumpy twelves,—

Montaigne with his sheepskin blistered,
And Howell the worse for wear,
And the worm-drilled Jesuits' Horace,
And the little old cropped Molière,

MY BOOKS

And the Burton I bought for a florin,
And the Rabelais foxed and flea'd,—
For the others I never have opened,
But those are the books I read.

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

THE COLLECTOR TO HIS LIBRARY

BROWN Books of mine, who never yet
Have caused me anguish or regret,—
Save when some fiend in human shape
Has set your tender sides agape,
Or soiled with some unmanly smear
The candour of your margin clear,
Or writ you with some phrase inane,
The bantling of an idle brain,—
I love you : and because must end
This commerce between friend and friend,
I do implore each kindly Fate—
To each and all I supplicate—
That you, whom I have loved so long,
May not be vended “for a song”;—
That you, my dear desire and care,
May ’scape the common thoroughfare,
The dust, the eating rain, and all
The shame and squalor of the Stall.
Rather I trust your lot may touch
Some Cræsus—if there should be such—
To buy you, and that you may so
From Cræsus unto Cræsus go
Till that inevitable day
When comes your moment of decay.

This, more than other good, I pray.

THE BOOK-PLATE'S PETITION

THE BOOK-PLATE'S PETITION

BY A GENTLEMAN OF THE TEMPLE

•
WHILE cynic CHARLES still trimm'd
the vane
'Twixt *Querouaille* and *Castlemaine*,
In days that shocked JOHN EVELYN,
My First Possessor fixed me in.
In days of *Dutchmen* and of frost,
The narrow sea with JAMES I cross'd,
Returning when once more began
The Age of *Saturn* and of ANNE.
I am a part of all the past :
I knew the GEORGES, first and last ;
I have been oft where else was none
Save the great wig of ADDISON ;
And seen on shelves beneath me grope
The little eager form of POPE.
I lost the Third that owned me when
French NOAILLES fled at Dettingen ;
The year JAMES WOLFE surprised Quebec,
The Fourth in hunting broke his neck ;
The day that WILLIAM HOGARTH dy'd,
The Fifth one found me in Cheapside.
This was a *Scholar*, one of those
Whose *Greek* is sounder than their *hose* ;

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

He lov'd old Books and nappy ale,
So liv'd at Streatham, next to THRALE.
'Twas there this stain of grease I boast
Was made by Dr. JOHNSON'S toast.
(He did it, as I think, for Spite ;
My Master call'd him *Jacobite* !)
And now that I so long to-day
Have rested *post discrimina*,
Safe in the brass-wir'd book-case where
I watch'd the Vicar's whit'ning hair,
Must I these travell'd bones inter
In some *Collector's* sepulchre !
Must I be torn herefrom and thrown
With *frontispiece* and *colophon* !
With vagrant *E's*, and *P's*, and *O's*,
The spoil of plunder'd *Folios* !
With scraps and snippets that to ME
Are naught but *kitchen company* !
Nay, rather, FRIEND, this favour grant me :
Tear me at once ; *but don't transplant me*.

CHEL TENHAM,

Sept. 31, 1792.

THE „WATER OF GOLD

THE WATER OF GOLD

“BUY,—who’ll buy?” In the market-place,
Out of the market din and clatter,
The quack with his puckered persuasive face
Patters away in the ancient patter.

“Buy,—who’ll buy? In this flask I hold—
In this little flask that I tap with my stick, sir—
Is the famed, infallible Water of Gold,—
The One, Original, True Elixir!

“Buy,—who’ll buy? There’s a maiden there,—
She with the ell-long flaxen tresses,—
Here is a draught that will make you fair,
Fit for an Emperor’s own caresses!

“Buy,—who’ll buy? Are you old and gray?
Drink but of this, and in less than a minute,
Lo! you will dance like the flowers in May,
Chirp and chirk like a new-fledged linnet!

“Buy,—who’ll buy? Is a baby ill?
Drop but a drop of this in his throttle,
Straight he will gossip and gorge his fill,
Brisk as a burgher over a bottle!

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

“ Here is wealth for your life,—if you will but ask ;

Here is health for your limb, without lint or lotion ;

Here is all that you lack, in this tiny flask ;

And the price is a couple of silver groschen !

“ Buy,—who’ll buy ? ” So the tale runs on :

And still in the Great World’s market-places

The Quack, with his quack catholicon,

Finds ever his crowd of upturned faces ;

For he plays on our hearts with his pipe and drum,

On our vague regret, on our weary yearning ;

For he sells the thing that never can come,

Or the thing that has vanished, past returning.

A FANCY FROM FONTENELLE

A FANCY FROM FONTENELLE

“ De mémoires de Roses on n’a point vu mourir le Jardinier.”

THE Rose in the garden slipped her bud,
And she laughed in the pride of her youthful
blood,
As she thought of the Gardener standing by—
“ He is old,—so old ! And he soon must die ! ”

The full Rose waxed in the warm June air,
And she spread and spread till her heart lay bare ;
And she laughed once more as she heard his
tread—
“ He is older now ! He will soon be dead ! ”

But the breeze of the morning blew, and found
That the leaves of the blown Rose strewed the
ground ;
And he came at noon, that Gardener old,
And he raked them gently under the mould.

*And I wove the thing to a random rhyme,
For the Rose is Beauty, the Gardener, Time.*

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

DON QUIXOTE

BEHIND thy pasteboard, on thy battered hack,
Thy lean cheek striped with plaster to and
fro,
Thy long spear levelled at the unseen foe,
And doubtful Sancho trudging at thy back,
Thou wert a figure strange enough, good lack !
To make wiseacredom, both high and low,
Rub purblind eyes, and (having watched thee go)
Dispatch its Dogberrys upon thy track :
Alas ! poor Knight ! Alas ! poor scul possest !
Yet would to-day when Courtesy grows chill,
And life's fine loyalties are turned to jest,
Some fire of thine might burn within us still !
Ah, would but one might lay his lance in rest,
And charge in earnest . . were it but a mill !

A .BROKEN SWORD

A BROKEN SWORD

(TO A. L.)

THE shopman shambled from the doorway out
And twitched it down—
Snapped in the blade! 'Twas scarcely dear, I
doubt,
At half-a-crown.

Useless enough! And yet can still be seen,
In letters clear,
Traced on the metal's rusty damaskeen—
“*Pour Paruenyr.*”

Whose was it once?—Who manned it once in hope
His fate to gain?
Who was it dreamed his oyster-world should ope
To this—in vain?

Maybe with some stout Argonaut it sailed
The Western Seas;
Maybe but to some paltry Nym availed
For toasting cheese!

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

Or decked by Beauty on some morning lawn
 With silken knot,
Perchance, ere night, for Church and King 'twas
 drawn—
 Perchance 'twas not !

Who knows—or cares? To-day, 'mid foils and
 gloves
 Its hilt depends,
Flanked by the favours of forgotten loves,—
 Remembered friends ;—

And oft its legend lends, in hours of stress,
 A word to aid ;
Or like a warning comes, in puffed success,
 Its broken blade.

THE POET'S SEAT

THE POET'S SEAT

AN IDYLL OF THE SUBURBS

"Ille terrarum mihi præter omnes

● *Angulus RIDET.*"—HOR. ii. 6.

IT was an elm-tree root of yore,
With lordly trunk, before they lopped it,
And weighty, said those five who bore
Its bulk across the lawn, and dropped it
Not once or twice, before it lay,
With two young pear-trees to protect it,
Safe where the Poet hoped some day
The curious pilgrim would inspect it.

He saw him with his Poet's eye,
The stately Maori, turned from etching
The ruin of St. Paul's, to try
Some object better worth the sketching :—
He saw him, and it nerved his strength
What time he hacked and hewed and scraped it,
Until the monster grew at length
The Master-piece to which he shaped it.

To wit—a goodly garden-seat,
And fit alike for Shah or Sophy,
With shelf for cigarettes complete,
And one, but lower down, for coffee ;

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

He planted pansies 'round its foot,—
“Pansies for thoughts!” and rose and arum;
The Motto (that he meant to put)
Was “*Ille angulus terrarum.*”

But “Oh! the change” (as Milton sings)—
“The heavy change!” When May departed,
When June with its “delightful things”
Had come and gone, the rough bark started,—
Began to lose its sylvan brown,
Grew parched, and powdery, and spotted;
And, though the Poet nailed it down,
It still flapped up, and dropped, and rotted.

Nor was this all. 'Twas next the scene
Of vague (and viscous) vegetations;
Queer fissures gaped, with ooziings green,
And moist, unsavoury exhalations,—
Faint wafts of wood decayed and sick,
Till, where he meant to carve his Motto,
Strange leathery fungi sprouted thick,
And made it like an oyster grotto.

Briefly, it grew a seat of scorn,
Bare,—shameless,—till, for fresh disaster,
From end to end, one April morn,
'Twas riddled like a pepper caster,—
Drilled like a vellum of old time;
And musing on this final mystery,
The Poet left off scribbling rhyme,
And took to studying Natural History.

THE POET'S SEAT

This was the turning of the tide ;
His five-act play is still unwritten ;
The dreams that now his soul divide
Are more of Lubbock than of Lytton ;
“ *Ballades* ” are “ verses vain ” to him
Whose first ambition is to lecture
(So much is man the sport of whim !)
On “ Insects and their Architecture.”

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

THE LOST ELIXIR

“ One drop of ruddy human blood puts more life into the veins of a poem than all the delusive ‘aurum potable’ that can be distilled out of the choicest library.”—LOWELL.

AH, yes, that “ drop of human blood !”—
We had it once, may be,
When our young song’s impetuous flood
First poured its ecstasy ;
But now the shrunk poetic vein
Yields not that priceless drop again.

We toil,—as toiled we not of old ;
Our patient hands distil
The shining spheres of chemic gold
With hard-won, fruitless skill ;
But that red drop still seems to be
Beyond our utmost alchemy.

Perchance, but most in later age,
Time’s after-gift, a tear,
Will strike a pathos on the page
Beyond all art sincere ;
But that “ one drop of human blood ”
Has gone with life’s first leaf and bud.

MEMORIAL VERSES

A DIALOGUE

TO THE MEMORY OF MR. ALEXANDER POPE

“*Non injussa cano.*”—VIRG.

POET. I sing of POPE—

FRIEND. What, POPE, the *Twitnam* Bard,
Whom *Dennis*, *Cibber*, *Tibbald* push'd so hard !
POPE of the *Dunciad* ! POPE who dar'd to woo,
And then to libel, *Wortley-Montagu* !
POPE of the *Ham-walks* story—

P. Scandals all !

Scandals that now I care not to recall.
Surely a little, in two hundred Years,
One may neglect Contemporary Sneers :—
Surely allowance for the Man may make
That had all *Grub Street* yelping in his Wake !
And who (I ask you) has been never Mean,
When urged by Envy, Anger or the Spleen ?
No : I prefer to look on POPE as one
Not rightly happy till his Life was done ;
Whose whole Career, romance it as you please,
Was (what he call'd it) but a “long Disease” :
Think of his Lot,—his Pilgrimage of Pain,
His “crazy Carcass” and his restless Brain ;

MEMORIAL VERSES

Think of his Night-Hours with their Feet of Lead,
His dreary Vigil and his aching Head ;
Think of all this, and marvel then to find
The "crooked Body with a crooked Mind !"
Nay rather, marvel that, in Fate's Despite,
You find so much to solace and delight,—
So much of Courage, and of Purpose high
In that unequal Struggle *not* to die.
I grant you freely that POPE played his Part
Sometimes ignobly—but he lov'd his Art ;
I grant you freely that he sought his Ends
Not always wisely—but he lov'd his Friends ;
And who of Friends a nobler Roll could show—
Swift, St. John, Bathurst, Marchmont, Peterb'ro',
Arbuthnot—

FR. ATTICUS ?

P. Well (*entre nous*),
Most that he said of *Addison* was *true*.
Plain Truth, you know—

FR. Is often not polite
(So *Hamlet* thought)—

P. And *Hamlet* (Sir) was right.
But leave POPE's Life. To-day, methinks, we touch
The Work too little and the Man too much.
Take up the *Lock*, the *Satires*, *Eloise*—
What Art supreme, what Elegance, what Ease !
How keen the Irony, the Wit how bright,
The Style how rapid, and the Verse how light !

A DIALOGUE

Then read once more, and you shall wonder yet
At Skill, at Turn, at Point, at Epithet.
“True Wit is Nature to Advantage dress’d”—
Was ever Thought so pithily express’d?
“And ten low Words oft creep in one dull Line”—
Ah, what a Homily on Yours, . . . and Mine!
Or take—to choose at Random—take but This—
“Ten censure wrong for one that writes amiss.”

FR. Pack’d and precise, no Doubt. Yet surely
those
Are but the Qualities we ask of Prose.
Was he a POET?

P. Yes: if that be what
Byron was certainly and *Bowles* was not;
Or say you grant him, to come nearer Date,
What *Dryden* had, that was denied to *Tate*—

FR. Which means, you claim for him the Spark
divine,
Yet scarce would place him on the highest Line—

P. True, there are Classes. POPE was most
of all
Akin to *Horace*, *Persius*, *Juvenal*;
POPE was, like them, the Censor of his Age,
An Age more suited to Repose than Rage;
When Rhyming turn’d from Freedom to the
Schools,
And shock’d with Licence, shudder’d into Rules;

MEMORIAL VERSES

When *Phæbus* touch'd the Poet's trembling Ear
With one supreme Commandment, *Be thou*
Clear;

When Thought meant less to reason than compile,
And the *Muse* labour'd . . chiefly with the File.
Beneath full Wigs no Lyric drew its Breath
As in the Days of great ELIZABETH ;
And to the Bards of ANNA was denied
The Note that *Wordsworth* heard on *Duddon*-side.
But POPE took up his Parable, and knit
The Woof of Wisdom with the Warp of Wit ;
He trimm'd the Measure on its equal Feet,
And smooth'd and fitted till the Line was neat ;
He taught the Pause with due Effect to fall ;
He taught the Epigram to come at Call ;
He wrote—

FR. His *Iliad* !

P. Well, suppose you own
You like your *Iliad* in the Prose of *Bohn*,—
Tho' if you'd learn in Prose how *Homer* sang,
'Twere best to learn of *Butcher* and of *Lang*,—
Suppose you say your Worst of POPE, declare
His Jewels Paste, his Nature a Parterre,
His Art but Artifice—I ask once more
Where have you seen such Artifice before ?
Where have you seen a Parterre better grac'd,
Or Gems that glitter like his Gems of Paste ?
Where can you show, among your Names of Note,
So much to copy and so much to quote ?
And where, in Fine, in all our English Verse,
A Style more trenchant and a Sense more terse ?

A DIALOGUE

So I, that love the old *Augustan* Days
Of formal Courtesies and formal Phrase ;
That like along the finished Line to feel
The Ruffle's Flutter and the Flash of Steel ;
That like my Couplet as compact as clear ;
That like my Satire sparkling tho' severe,
Unmix'd with Bathos and unmarr'd by Trope,
I fling my Cap for Polish—and for POPE !

MEMORIAL VERSES

A FAMILIAR EPISTLE

TO * * ESQ. OF * * WITH A LIFE OF THE LATE
INGENIOUS MR. WM. HOGARTH

DEAR Cosmopolitan,—I know
I *should* address you a *Rondeau*,
Or else announce what I've to say
At least *en Ballade fratrisée*;
But No: for once I leave Gymnasticks,
And take to simple *Hudibrasticks*;
Why should I choose another Way,
When this was good enough for GAY?

You love, my FRIEND, with me, I think,
That Age of Lustre and of Link,*
Of *Chelsea* China and long "s"es,
Of Bag-wigs and of flowered Dresses;
That Age of Folly and of Cards,
Of Hackney Chairs and Hackney Bards;
—No H—LTS, no K—G—N P—LS were then
Dispensing Competence to Men;
The gentle Trade was left to Churls,
Your frowsy TONSONS and your CURLLS;
Mere Wolves in Ambush to attack
The AUTHOR in a Sheep-skin Back;

A FAMILIAR EPISTLE

Then SAVAGE and his Brother-Sinners
In *Porridge-Island* div'd for Dinners ;
Or doz'd on *Covent Garden* Bulks,
And liken'd Letters to the Hulks ;—
You know that by-gone Time, I say,
That aimless, easy-moral'd Day,
When rosy Morn found MADAM still
Wrangling at *Ombre* or *Quadrille* ;
When good Sir JOHN reel'd Home to Bed,
From *Pontack's* or the *Shakespear's Head* ;
When TRIP convey'd his Master's Cloaths,
And took his Titles and his Oaths ;
While BETTY, in a cast *Brocade*,
Ogled MY LORD at Masquerade ;
When GARRICK play'd the guilty *Richard*,
Or mouth'd *Macbeth* with MRS. PRITCHARD ;
When FOOTE grimac'd his snarling Wit ;
When CHURCHILL bullied in the Pit ;
When thè CUZZONI sang—

But there !

The farther Catalogue I spare,
Having no Purpose to eclipse
That tedious Tale of HOMER's Ships ;—
This is the MAN that drew it all
From *Pannier Alley* to the *Mall*,
Then turn'd and drew it once again
From *Bird-Cage Walk* to *Lewknor's Lane* ;—
Its Rakes and Fools, its Rogues and Sots ;
Its bawling Quacks, its starveling Scots ;
Its Ups and Downs, its Rags and Garters,
Its HENLEYS, LOVATS, MALCOLMS, CHARTRES ;
Its Splendour, Squalor, Shame, Disease ;
Its *quicquid agunt Homines* ;—

MEMORIAL VERSES

Nor yet omitted to pourtray
Furens quid possit Foemina ;—
In short, held up to ev'ry Class
NATURE'S unflatt'ring looking-Glass ;
And, from his Canvass, spoke to All
The Message of a JUVENAL.

Take Him. His Merits most aver
His weak Point is—his Chronicler !

NOVR. 1, 1879.

HENRY FIELDING

HENRY FIELDING

(TO JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL)

NOT from the ranks of those we call
Philosopher or Admiral,—
Neither as LOCKE was, nor as BLAKE,
Is that Great Genius for whose sake
We keep this Autumn festival.

And yet in one sense, too, was he
A soldier—of humanity ;
And, surely, philosophic mind
Belonged to him whose brain designed
That teeming COMIC EPOS where,
As in CERVANTES and MOLIÈRE,
Jostles the medley of Mankind.

Our ENGLISH NOVEL's pioneer !
His was the eye that saw first clear
How, not in natures half-effaced
By cant of Fashion and of Taste,—
Not in the circles of the Great,
Faint-blooded and exanimate,—

MEMORIAL VERSES

Lay the true field of Jest and Whim,
Which we to-day reap after him.
No :—he stepped lower down and took
The piebald PEOPLE for his Book !

Ah, what a wealth of Life there is
In that large-laughing page of his !
What store and stock of Common-Sense,
Wit, Wisdom, Books, Experience !
How his keen Satire flashes through,
And cuts a sophistry in two !
How his ironic lightning plays
Around a rogue and all his ways !
Ah, how he knots his lash to see
That ancient cloak, Hypocrisy !

Whose are the characters that give
Such round reality ?—that live
With such full pulse ? Fair SOPHY yet
Sings *Bobbing Joan* at the spinet ;
We see AMELIA cooking still
That supper for the recreant WILL ;
We hear Squire WESTERN'S headlong tones
Bawling " Wut ha ?—wut ha ? " to JONES.
Are they not present now to us,—
The Parson with his *Æschylus* ?
SLIPSLOP the frail, and NORTHERTON,
PARTRIDGE, and BATH, and HARRISON ?—
Are they not breathing, moving,—all
The motley, merry carnival
That FIELDING kept, in days ago ?

HENRY FIELDING

He was the first that dared to draw
Mankind the mixture that he saw ;
Not wholly good nor ill, but both,
With fine intricacies of growth.
He pulled the wraps of flesh apart,
And showed the working human heart ;
He scorned to drape the truthful nude
With smooth, decorous platitude !

He was too frank, may be ; and dared
Too boldly. Those whose faults he bared,
Writhed in the ruthless grasp that brought
Into the light their secret thought.
Therefore the TARTUFFE-throng who say
“ *Couvrez ce sein,* ” and look that way,—
Therefore the Priests of Sentiment
Rose on him with their garments rent.
Therefore the gadfly swarm whose sting
Plies ever round some generous thing,
Buzzed of old bills and tavern-scores,
Old “ might-have-beens ” and “ heretofores ” ;—
Then, from that garbled record-list,
Made him his own Apologist.

And was he ? Nay,—let who has known
Nor Youth nor Error, cast the stone !
If to have sense of Joy and Pain
Too keen,—to rise, to fall again,
To live too much,—be sin, why then,
This was no pattern among men.
But those who turn that later page,
The Journal of his middle-age,

MEMORIAL VERSES

Watch him serene in either fate,—
Philanthropist and Magistrate ;
Watch him as Husband, Father, Friend,
Faithful, and patient to the end ;
Grieving, as e'en the brave may grieve,
But for the loved ones he must leave :
These will admit—if any can—
That 'neath the green Estrella trees,
No artist merely, but a MAN,
Wrought on our noblest island-plan,
Sleeps with the alien Portuguese.

A POSTSCRIPT TO "RETALIATION"

A POSTSCRIPT TO "RETALIATION"

[*After the Fourth Edition of Doctor GOLDSMITH'S Retaliation was printed, the Publisher received a supplementary Epitaph on the Wit and Punster Caleb Whitefoord. Though it is found appended to the later issues of the Poem, it has been suspected that Whitefoord wrote it himself. It may be that the following, which has recently come to light, is another forgery.*]

HERE JOHNSON is laid. Have a care how you
walk;
If he stir in his sleep, in his sleep he will talk.
Ye gods! how he talk'd! What a torrent of
sound,
His hearers invaded, encompass'd and—drown'd!
What a banquet of memory, fact, illustration,
In that innings-for-one that he call'd *conversation*!
Can't you hear his sonorous "Why no, Sir!" and
"Stay, Sir!
Your premiss is wrong," or "You don't see your
way, Sir!"
How he silenc'd a prig, or a slip-shod romancer!
How he pounc'd on a fool with a knock-me-down
answer!

But peace to his slumbers! Tho' rough in the
rind,
The heart of the giant was gentle and kind:

MEMORIAL VERSES

What signifies now, if in bouts with a friend,
When his pistol miss'd fire, he would use the
butt-end?

If he trampled your flow'rs, like a bull in a garden,
What matter for that? he was sure to ask pardon;
And you felt on the whole, tho' he'd toss'd you and
gor'd you,

It was something, at least, that he had not ignor'd
you.

Yes! the outside was rugged. But test him
within,

You found he had nought of the bear but the skin;
And for bottom and base to his *anfractuosity*,
A fund of fine feeling, good taste, generosity.
He was true to his conscience, his King, and his
duty;

And he hated the *Whigs*, and he soften'd to
Beauty.

Turn now to his Writings. I grant, in his tales,
That he made little fishes talk vastly like whales;
I grant that his language was rather emphatic,
Nay, even—to put the thing plainly—dogmatic;
But read him for Style,—and dismiss from your
thoughts,

The crowd of compilers who copied his faults,—
Say, where is there English so full and so clear,
So weighty, so dignified, manly, sincere?
So strong in expression, conviction, persuasion?
So prompt to take colour from place and occasion?
So widely remov'd from the doubtful, the ten-
tative;

So truly—and in the best sense—argumentative?

A POSTSCRIPT TO "RETALIATION"

You may talk of your BURKES and your GIBBONS
so clever,

But I hark back to him with a "JOHNSON for
ever!"

And I feel as I muse on his ponderous figure,
Tho' he's great in this age, in the next he'll grow
bigger;

And still while his . . [*Cætera Desunt.*]

MEMORIAL VERSES

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

*"Nec turpem senectam
Degere, nec cithara carentem."*

—HOR. i. 31.

“NOT to be tuneless in old age !”
Ah ! surely blest his pilgrimage,
Who, in his Winter’s snow,
Still sings with note as sweet and clear
As in the morning of the year
When the first violets blow !

Blest !—but more blest, whom Summer’s heat,
Whom Spring’s impulsive stir and beat,
Have taught no feverish lure ;
Whose Muse, benignant and serene,
Still keeps his Autumn chaplet green
Because his verse is pure !

Lie calm, O white and laureate head !
Lie calm, O Dead, that art not dead,
Since from the voiceless grave,
Thy voice shall speak to old and young
While song yet speaks an English tongue
By Charles’ or Thamis’ wave !

CHARLES GEORGE GORDON

CHARLES GEORGE GORDON

“ RATHER be dead than praised,” he said,
That hero, like a hero dead,
In this slack-sinewed age endued
With more than antique fortitude !

“ Rather be dead than praised ! ” Shall we,
Who loved thee, now that Death sets free
Thine eager soul, with word and line
Profane that empty house of thine ?

Nay,—let us hold, be mute. Our pain
Will not be less that we refrain ;
And this our silence shall but be
A larger monument to thee.

MEMORIAL VERSES

VICTOR HUGO

HE set the trumpet to his lips, and lo !
The clash of waves, the roar of winds that
 blow,
The strife and stress of Nature's warring things,
Rose like a storm-cloud, upon angry wings.

He set the reed-pipe to his lips, and lo !
The wreck of landscape took a rosy glow,
And Life, and Love, and gladness that Love brings
Laughed in the music, like a child that sings.

Master of each, Arch-Master ! We that still
Wait in the verge and outskirt of the Hill,
Look upward lonely—lonely to the height
Where thou hast climbed, for ever, out of sight !

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

EMIGRAVIT, OCTOBER VI., MDCCCXCII.

GRIEF there will be, and may,
When King Apollo's bay
Is cut midwise ;
Grief that a song is stilled,
Grief for the unfulfilled
Singer that dies.

Not so we mourn thee now,
Not so we grieve that thou,
MASTER, art passed,
Since thou thy song didst raise,
Through the full round of days,
E'en to the last.

Grief there may be, and will,
When that the singer still
Sinks in the song ;
When that the wingéd rhyme
Fails of the promised prime,
Ruined and wrong.

MEMORIAL VERSES

Not thus we mourn thee^t—we—
Not thus we grieve for thee,
MASTER and Friend ;
Since, like a clearing flame,
Clearer thy pure song came
E'en to the end.

Nay—nor for thee we grieve
E'en as for those that leave
Life without name ;
Lost as the stars that set,
Empty of men's regret,
Empty of fame.

Rather we count thee one
Who, when his race is run,
Layeth him down,
Calm—through all coming days,
Filled with a nation's praise,
Filled with renown.

FABLES OF LITERATURE
AND ART

THE POET AND THE CRITICS

IF those who wield the Rod forget,
'Tis truly—*Quis custodiet?*

A certain Bard (as Bards will do)
Dressed up his Poems for Review.
His Type was plain, his Title clear ;
His Frontispiece by FOURDRINIER.
Moreover, he had on the Back
A sort of sheepskin Zodiac ;—
A Mask, a Harp, an Owl,—in fine,
A neat and “ classical ” Design.
But the *in-Side*?—Well, good or bad,
The Inside was the best he had :
Much Memory,—more Imitation ;—
Some Accidents of Inspiration ;—
Some Essays in that finer Fashion
Where Fancy takes the place of Passion ;—
And some (of course) more roughly wrought
To catch the Advocates of Thought.

In the less-crowded Age of ANNE,
Our Bard had been a favoured Man ;
Fortune, more chary with the Sickle,
Had ranked him next to GARTH or TICKELL ;—
He might have even dared to hope
A Line’s Malignity from POPE !

FABLES OF LITERATURE AND ART

But now, when Folks are hard to please,
And Poets are as thick as—Peas,
The Fates are not so prone to flatter,
Unless, indeed, a Friend No Matter.

The Book, then, had a minor Credit :
The Critics took, and doubtless read it.
Said A.—*These little Songs display
No lyric Gift; but still a Ray,—
A Promise. They will do no Harm.*
'Twas kindly, if not *very* warm.
Said B.—*The Author may, in Time,
Acquire the Rudiments of Rhyme :
His Efforts now are scarcely Verse.*
This, certainly, could not be worse.

Sorely discomfited, our Bard
Worked for another ten Years—hard.
Meanwhile the World, unmoved, went on ;
New Stars shot up, shone out, were gone ;
Before his second Volume came
His Critics had forgot his Name :
And who, forsooth, is bound to know
Each Laureate *in embryo* !
They tried and tested him, no less,—
The sworn Assayers of the Press.
Said A.—*The Author may, in Time*
Or much what B. had said of Rhyme.
Then B.—*These little Songs display*
And so forth, in the sense of A.
Over the Bard I throw a Veil.

There is no MORAL to this Tale.

THE TOYMAN

THE TOYMAN

WITH Verse, is Form the first, or Sense?
Hereon men waste their Eloquence.

“Sense (cry the one Side), Sense, of course.
How can you lend your Theme its Force?
How can you be direct and clear,
Concise, and (best of all) sincere,
If you must pen your Strain sublime
In Bonds of Measure and of Rhyme?
Who ever heard true Grief relate
Its heartfelt Woes in ‘six’ and ‘eight’?
Or felt his manly Bosom swell
Beneath a French-made *Villanelle*?
How can your *Mens divinior* sing
Within the Sonnet’s scanty Ring,
Where she must chant her Orphic Tale
In just so many Lines, or fail? . . .”

“Form is the first (the Others bawl);
If not, why write in Verse at all?
Why not your throbbing Thoughts expose
(If Verse be such Restraint) in Prose?
For surely if you speak your Soul
Most freely where there’s least Control,

FABLES OF LITERATURE AND ART

It follows you must speak it best
By Rhyme (or Reason) unrepent.
Blest Hour! be not delayed too long,
When Britain frees her Slaves of Song;
And barred no more by Lack of Skill,
The Mob may crowd *Parnassus* Hill! . . .”

Just at this Point—for you must know,
All this was but the To-and-fro
Of MATT and DICK who played with Thought,
And lingered longer than they ought
(So pleasant 'tis to tap one's Box
And trifle round a Paradox!)—
There came—but I forgot to say,
'Twas in the Mall, the Month was May—
There came a Fellow where they sat,
His Elf-locks peeping through his Hat,
Who bore a Basket. Straight his Load
He set upon the Ground, and showed
His newest Toy—a Card with Strings.
On this side was a Bird with Wings,
On that, a Cage. You twirled, and lo!
The Twain were one.

Said MATT, “E'en so.
Here's the Solution in a Word :—
Form is the Cage and Sense the Bird.
The Poet twirls them in his Mind,
And wins the Trick with both combined.”

THE SUCCESSFUL AUTHOR

THE SUCCESSFUL AUTHOR

WHEN Fate presents us with the Bays,
We prize the Praiser, not the Praise.
We scarcely think our Fame eternal
If vouched for by the *Farthing Journal*;
But when the *Craftsman's* self has spoken,
We take it for a certain Token.
This an Example best will show,
Derived from DENNIS DIDEROT.

A hackney Author, who'd essayed
All Hazards of the scribbling Trade;
And failed to live by every Mode,
From *Persian Tale* to *Birthday Ode*;
Embarked at last, thro' pure Starvation,
In Theologic Speculation.
'Tis commonly affirmed his Pen
Had been most orthodox till then;
But oft, as SOCRATES has said,
The Stomach's stronger than the Head;
And, for a sudden Change of Creed,
There is no *Jesuit* like Need.
Then, too, 'twas cheap; he took it all,
By force of Habit, from the Gaul.

FABLES OF LITERATURE AND ART

He showed (the Trick is nowise new)
 That Nothing we believe is true ;
 But chiefly that Mistake is rife
 Touching the point of *After-Life* ;
 Here all were wrong from PLATO down :
 His Price (in Boards) was Half-a-Crown.
 The Thing created quite a Scare :—
 He got a Letter from VOLTAIRE,
 Naming him *Ami* and *Confrère* ;
 Besides two most attractive Offers
 Of Chaplaincies from noted Scoffers.
 He fell forthwith his Head to lift,
 To talk of “ I and DR. SW—FT ” ;
 And brag, at Clubs, as one who spoke,
 On equal Terms, with BOLINGBROKE.
 But, at the last, a Missive came
 That put the Copestone to his Fame.
 The Boy who brought it would not wait :
 It bore a *Covent-Garden* Date ;—
 A woful Sheet with doubtful Ink,
 And Air of *Bridewell* or the *Clink*.
 It ran in this wise :—*Learned Sir !*
We, whose Subscriptions follow here,
Desire to state our Fellow-feeling
In this Religion you're revealing.
You make it plain that if so be
We 'scape on Earth from Tyburn Tree,
There's nothing left for us to fear
In this—or any other Sphere.
We offer you our Thanks ; and hope
Your Honor, too, may cheat the Rope !
 With that came all the Names beneath,
 AS BLUESKIN, JERRY CLINCH, MACHEATH,

THE SUCCESSFUL AUTHOR

BET CARELESS, and the Rest—a Score
Of Rogues and *Bona Robas* more.

This *Newgate Calendar* he read :
'Tis not recorded what he said.

FABLES OF LITERATURE AND ART

THE DILETTANT

THE most oppressive Form of Cant
Is that of your Art-Dilettant :—
Or rather “was.” The Race, I own,
To-day is, happily, unknown.

A Painter, now by Fame forgot,
Had painted—’tis no matter what ;
Enough that he resolved to try
The Verdict of a critic Eye.
The Friend he sought made no Pretence
To more than candid Common-sense,
Nor held himself from Fault exempt.
He praised, it seems, the whole Attempt.
Then, pausing long, showed here and there
That Parts required a nicer Care,—
A closer Thought. The Artist heard,
Expostulated, chafed, demurred.

Just then popped in a passing Beau,
Half Pertness, half Pulvilio ;—
One of those Mushroom Growths that spring
From *Grand Tours* and from Tailoring ;—
And dealing much in terms of Art
Picked up at Sale and auction Mart.

THE DILETTANT

Straight to the Masterpiece he ran
With lifted Glass, and thus began,
Mumbling as fast as he could speak :—
“ Sublime !—prodigious !—truly Greek !
That ‘ Air of Head ’ is just divine ;
That contour GUIDO, every line ;
That Forearm, too, has quite the *Gusto*
Of the third Manner of ROBUSTO”
Then, with a Simper and a Cough,
He skipped a little farther off :—
“ The middle Distance, too, is placed
Quite in the best Italian Taste ;
And Nothing could be more effective
Than the *Ordonnance* and Perspective
You’ve sold it ?—No ?—Then take my word,
I shall speak of it to MY LORD.
What !—I insist. Don’t stir, I beg.
Adieu !” With that he made a Leg,
Offered on either Side his Box,—
So took his *Virtù* off to COCK’S.

The Critic, with a Shrug, once more
Turned to the Canvas as before.
“ Nay,”—said the Painter—“ I allow
The Worst that you can tell me now.
'Tis plain my Art must go to School,
To win such Praises—from a FOOL !”

FABLES OF LITERATURE AND ART

THE TWO PAINTERS

IN Art some hold Themselves content
If they but compass what they meant ;
Others prefer, their Purpose gained,
Still to find Something unattained—
Something whereto they vaguely grope
With no more Aid than that of Hope.
Which are the Wiser ? Who shall say !
The prudent Follower of GAY
Declines to speak for either View,
But sets his Fable 'twixt the two.

Once—'twas in good Queen ANNA'S Time—
While yet in this benighted Clime
The GENIUS of the ARTS (now known
On mouldy Pediments alone)
Protected all the Men of Mark,
Two Painters met Her in the Park.
Whether She wore the Robe of Air
Portrayed by VERRIO and LAGUERRE ;
Or, like BELINDA, trod this Earth,
Equipped with Hoop of monstrous Girth,
And armed at every Point for Slaughter
With Essences and Orange-water,
I know not : but it seems that then,
After some talk of Brush and Pen,—

THE TWO PAINTERS

Some chat of^d Art both High and Low,
Of VAN'S "Goose-Pie" and KNELLER'S "*Mot*,"—
The Lady, as a Goddess should,
Bade Them ask of Her what They would.
"Then, Madam, my request," says BRISK,
Giving his *Ramillie* a whisk,
"Is that your Majesty will crown
My humble Efforts with Renown.
Let me, I beg it—Thanks to You—
Be praised for Everything I do,
Whether I paint a Man of Note,
Or only plan a Petticoat."
"Nay," quoth the other, "I confess"
(This One was plainer in his Dress,
And even poorly clad), "for me,
I scorn Your Popularity.
Why should I care to catch at once
The Point 'of View of every Dunce?
Let me do well, indeed, but find
The Fancy first, the Work behind;
Nor wholly touch the thing I wanted"
The Goddess both Petitions granted.

Each in his Way, achieved Success;
But One grew Great. And which One? Guess.

FABLES OF LITERATURE AND ART

THE CLAIMS OF THE MUSE

TOO oft we hide our Frailties' Blame
Beneath some simple-sounding Name !
So Folks, who in gilt Coaches ride,
Will call Display but *Proper Pride* ;
So Spendthrifts, who their Acres lose,
Curse not their Folly but the *Jews* ;
So *Madam*, when her Roses faint,
Resorts to . . . anything but *Paint*.

An honest Uncle, who had plied
His Trade of Mercer in *Cheapside*,
Until his Name on '*Change* was found
Good for some Thirty Thousand Pound,
Was burdened with an Heir inclined
To thoughts of quite a different Kind.
His Nephew dreamed of Naught but Verse
From Morn to Night, and, what was worse,
He quitted all at length to follow
That "sneaking, whey-faced God, APOLLO."
In plainer Words, he ran up Bills
At *Child's*, at *Batson's*, and at *Will's* ;
Discussed the Claims of rival Bards
At Midnight,—with a Pack of Cards ;
Or made excuse for "t'other Bottle"
Over a point in ARISTOTLE.
This could not last, and like his Betters

THE CLAIMS OF THE MUSE

He found, too soon, the *Cost* of Letters.
Back to his Uncle's House he flew,
Confessing that he'd not a *Sou*.
'Tis true, his Reasons, if sincere,
Were more poetical than clear :
"Alas !" he said, "I name no Names :
The *Muse*, dear Sir, the *Muse* has claims."
His Uncle, who, behind his Till,
Knew less of *Pindus* than *Snow-Hill*,
Looked grave, but thinking (as Men say)
That Youth but once can have its Day,
Equipped anew his *Pride* and *Hope*
To frisk it on *Parnassus* Slope.
In one short Month he sought the Door
More shorn and ragged than before.
This Time he showed but small Contrition,
And gloried in his mean Condition.
"The greatest of our Race," he said,
"Through *Asian* Cities begged his Bread.
The *Muse*—the *Muse* delights to see
Not *Broadcloth* but *Philosophy* !
Who doubts of this her Honour shames,
But (as you know) she has her Claims"
"Friend," quoth his Uncle then, "I doubt
This scurvy Craft that you're about
Will lead your *philosophic* Feet
Either to *Bedlam* or the *Fleet*.
Still, as I would not have you lack,
Go get some *Broadcloth* to your Back,
And—if it please this precious *Muse*—
'Twere well to purchase decent Shoes.
Though harkye, Sir" The Youth was gone,
Before the good Man could go on.

FABLES OF LITERATURE AND ART

And yet ere long again was seen '
That Votary of *Hippocrene*.
As along *Cheap* his Way he took,
His Uncle spied him by a Brook,
Not such as *Nymphs Castalian* pour,—
'Twas but the Kennel, nothing more.
His Plight was plain by every Sign
Of Idiot Smile and Stains of Wine.
He strove to rise, and wagged his Head—
“The *Muse*, dear Sir, the *Muse*—” he said.
“*Muse!*” quoth the Other, in a Fury,
“The *Muse* shan’t serve you, I assure ye.
She’s just some wanton, idle *Jade*
That makes young Fools forget their Trade,—
Who should be whipped, if I’d my Will,
From *Charing Cross* to *Ludgate Hill*.
She’s just” But he began to stut-
ter,
So left SIR GRACELESS in the Gutter.

THE 'SQUIRE AT VAUXHALL

THE 'SQUIRE AT VAUXHALL

NOTHING so idle as to waste
This Life disputing upon *Taste*;
And most—let that sad Truth be written—
In this contentious Land of *Britain*,
Where each one holds “it seems to me”
Equivalent to *Q. E. D.*,
And if you dare to doubt his Word
Proclaims you Blockhead and absurd.
And then, too often, the Debate
Is not 'twixt First and Second-rate,
Some narrow Issue, where a Touch
Of more or less can't matter much,
But, and this makes the Case so sad,
Betwixt undoubted Good and Bad.
Nay,—there are some so strangely wrought,—
So warped and twisted in their Thought,—
That, if the Fact be but confest,
They like the baser Thing the best.
Take BOTTOM, who for one, 'tis clear,
Possessed a “reasonable Ear”;
He might have had at his Command
The Symphonies of *Fairy-Land*;
Well, our immortal SHAKESPEAR owns
The Oaf preferred the “Tongs and Bones”!

FABLES OF LITERATURE AND ART

'Squire HOMESPUN from *Clod-Hall* rode down,
As the Phrase is—"to see the Town";
(The Town, in those Days, mostly lay
Between the *Tavern* and the *Play*.)
Like all their Worships the J.P.'s,
He put up at the *Hercules*;
Then sallied forth on Shanks his Mare,
Rather than jolt it in a Chair,—
A curst, new-fangled *Little-Ease*,
That knocks your Nose against your Knees.
For the good 'Squire was Country-bred,
And had strange Notions in his Head,
Which made him see in every Cur
The starveling Breed of *Hanover*;
He classed your Kickshaws and *Ragoos*
With Popery and Wooden Shoes;
Railed at all Foreign Tongues as Lingo,
And sighed o'er *Chaos* Wine for Stingo.

Hence, as he wandered to and fro,
Nothing could please him, high or low.
As *Savages* at *Ships of War*
He looked unawed on *Temple-Bar*;
Scarce could conceal his Discontent
With *Fish-Street* and the *Monument*;
And might (except at Feeding-Hour)
Have scorned the Lion in the *Tower*,
But that the Lion's Race was run,
And—for the Moment—there was none.

At length, blind Fate, that drives us all,
Brought him at Even to *Vauxhall*,

THE 'SQUIRE AT VAUXHALL

What Time the eager Matron jerks
Her slow Spouse to the *Water-Works*,
And the coy Spinster, half-afraid,
Consults the *Hermit* in the Shade.
Dazed with the Din and Crowd, the 'Squire
Sank in a Seat before the Choir.
The FAUSTINETTA, fair and showy,
Warbled an Air from *Arsinoë*,
Playing her Bosom and her Eyes
As Swans do when they agonize.
Alas! to some a Mug of Ale
Is better than an *Orphic Tale*!
The 'Squire grew dull, the 'Squire grew bored;
His chin dropt down; he slept; he snored.
Then, straying thro' the "poppied Reign,"
He dreamed him at *Clod-Hall* again;
He heard once more the well-known Sounds,
The Crack of Whip, the Cry of Hounds.
He rubbed his Eyes, woke up, and lo!
A Change had come upon the Show.
Where late the Singer stood, a Fellow,
Clad in a Jockey's Coat of Yellow,
Was mimicking a Cock that crew.
Then came the Cry of Hounds anew,
Yoicks! Stole Away! and harking back;
Then Ringwood leading up the Pack.
The 'Squire in Transport slapped his Knee
At this most hugeous Pleasantry.
The sawn Wood followed; last of all
The Man brought something in a Shawl,—
Something that struggled, scraped, and
squeaked
As Porkers do, whose tails are tweaked.

FABLES OF LITERATURE AND ART

Our honest 'Squire could scarcely sit,
So excellent he thought the Wit.
But when *Sir Wag* drew off the Sheath
And showed there was no Pig beneath,
His pent-up Wonder, Pleasure, Awe,
Exploded in a long Guffaw :
And, to his dying Day, he'd swear
That Naught in Town the Bell could bear
From "Jockey wi' the Yellow Coat
That had a Farm-Yard in his Throat !"

MORAL THE FIRST you may discover :
The 'Squire was like TITANIA's lover ;
He put a squeaking Pig before
The Harmony of CLAYTON'S Score.

MORAL THE SECOND—not so clear ;
But still it shall be added here :
He praised the Thing he understood ;
'Twere well if every Critic would.

THE CLIMACTERIC

THE CLIMACTERIC

WHEN do the reasoning Powers decline?
The Ancients said at Forty-Nine.
At Forty-Nine behoves it then
To quit the Inkhorn and the Pen,
Since ARISTOTLE so decreed.
Premising thus, we now proceed.

In that thrice-favoured Northern Land,
Where most the Flowers of Thought expand,
And all things nebulous grow clear
Through Spectacles and Lager-Beer,
There lived, at *Dumpelsheim* the Lesser,
A certain High-Dutch Herr Professor.
Than GROTIUS more alert and quick,
More logical than BURGERSDYCK,
His Lectures both so much transcended,
That far and wide his Fame extended,
Proclaiming him to every clime
Within a Mile of *Dumpelsheim*.
But chief he taught, by Day and Night,
The Doctrine of the Stagirite,
Proving it fixed beyond Dispute,
In Ways that none could well refute;
For if by Chance 'twas urged that Men
O'er-stepped the Limit now and then,

FABLES OF LITERATURE AND ART

He'd show unanswerably still^c
Either that all they did was "Nil,"
Or else 'twas marked by Indication
Of grievous mental Degradation :
Nay—he could even trace, they say,
That Degradation to a Day.

The Years rolled on, and as they flew,
More famed the Herr Professor grew,
His "*Locus* of the Pineal Gland"
(A Masterpiece he long had planned)
Had reached the End of Book Eleven,
And he was nearing Forty-Seven.
Admirers had not long to wait ;
The last Book came at Forty-Eight,
And should have been the Heart and Soul—
The Crown and Summit—of the whole.
But now the oddest Thing ensued ;
'Twas so insufferably crude,
So feeble and so poor, 'twas plain
The Writer's Mind was on the wane.
Nothing could possibly be said ;
E'en Friendship's self must hang the head,
While jealous Rivals, scarce so civil,
Denounced it openly as "Drivel."
Never was such Collapse. In brief,
The poor Professor died of Grief.

With fitting mortuary Rhyme
They buried him at *Dumpelsheim*,
And as they sorrowing set about
A "Short Memoir," the Truth came out.

THE CLIMACTERIC

He had been older than he knew.
The Parish Clerk had put a " 2 "
In place of " Nought," and made his Date
Of Birth a Brace of Years too late.
When he had written Book the Last,
His true Climacteric had past !

MORAL.—To estimate your Worth,
Be certain as to date of Birth.

TALES IN RHYME

THE VIRGIN WITH THE BELLS

MUCH strange is true. And yet so much
Dan Time thereto of doubtful lays
He blurs them both beneath his touch :—

In this our tale his part he plays.
At Florence, so the legend tells,
There stood a church that men would praise

(Even where Art the most excels)
For works of price ; but chief for one
They called the “ Virgin with the Bells.”

Gracious she was, and featly done,
With crown of gold about the hair,
And robe of blue with stars thereon,

And sceptre in her hand did bear ;
And o’er her, in an almond tree,
Three little golden bells there were,

Writ with Faith, Hope, and Charity.
None knew from whence she came of old,
Nor whose the sculptor’s name should be

TALES IN RHYME

Of great or small. But this they told :—
That once from out the blaze of square,
And bickering folk that bought and sold,

More moved no doubt of heat than prayer,
Came to the church an Umbrian,
Lord of much gold and champaign fair,

But, for all this, a hard, haught man.
To whom the priests, in humbleness,
At once to beg for alms began,

Praying him grant of his excess
Such as for poor men's bread might pay,
Or give their saint a gala-dress.

Thereat with scorn he answered—"Nay,
Most Reverend! Far too well ye know,
By guile and wile, the fox's way

"To swell the Church's overflow.
But ere from me the least carline
Ye win, this summer's sky shall snow ;

"Or, likelier still, your doll's-eyed queen
Shall ring her bells . . . but not of craft.
By Bacchus ! ye are none too lean

"For fasting folk !" With that he laughed,
And so, across the porphyry floor,
His hand upon his dagger-haft,

THE VIRGIN WITH THE BELLS

Strode, and of these was seen no more.
Nor, of a truth, much marvelled they
At those his words, since gear and store

Oft dower shrunk souls. But, on a day,
While yet again throughout the square,
The buyers in their noisy way,

Chaffered around the basket ware,
It chanced (I but the tale reveal,
Nor true nor false therein declare)—

It chanced that when the priest would kneel
Before the taper's flickering flame,
Sudden a little tremulous peal

From out the Virgin's altar came.
And they that heard must fain recall
The Umbrian, and the words of shame

Spoke in his pride, and therewithal
Came news how, at that very date
And hour of time, was fixed his fall,

Who, of the Duke, was banned the State,
And all his goods, and lands as well,
To Holy Church were confiscate.

Such is the tale the Frati tell.

TALES IN RHYME

A TALE OF POLYPHEME

“THERE’S nothing new”—Not that I go so far
As he who also said “There’s nothing true,”
Since, on the contrary, I hold there are
Surviving still a verity or two ;
But, as to novelty, in my conviction,
There’s nothing new,—especially in fiction.

Hence, at the outset, I make no apology,
If this *my* story is as old as Time,
Being, indeed, that idyll of mythology,—
The Cyclops’ love,—which, somewhat varied, I’m
To tell once more, the adverse Muse permitting,
In easy rhyme, and phrases neatly fitting.

“Once on a time”—there’s nothing new, I said—
It may be fifty years ago or more,
Beside a lonely posting-road that led
Seaward from Town, there used to stand of yore,
With low-built bar and old bow-window shady,
An ancient Inn, the “Dragon and the Lady.”

Say that by chance, wayfaring Reader mine,
You cast a shoe, and at this dusty Dragon,
Where beast and man were equal on the sign,
Inquired at once for Blacksmith and for flagon :

A TALE OF POLYPHEME

The landlord showed you, while you drank your
hops,
A road-side break beyond the straggling shops.

And so directed, thereupon you led
Your halting roadster to a kind of pass ;
This you descended with a crumbling tread,
And found the sea beneath you like a glass ;
And soon, beside a building partly walled—
Half hut, half cave—you raised your voice and
called.

Then a dog growled ; and straightway there began
Tumult within—for, bleating with affright,
A goat burst out, escaping from the can ;
And, following close, rose slowly into sight—
Blind of one eye, and black with toil and tan—
An uncouth, limping, heavy-shouldered man.

Part smith, part seaman, and part shepherd too :
You scarce knew which, as, pausing with the pail
Half filled with goat's milk, silently he drew
An anvil forth, and reaching shoe and nail,
Bared a red forearm, bringing into view
Anchors and hearts in shadowy tattoo.

And then he lit his fire But I dispense
Henceforth with you, my Reader, and your horse,
As being but a colourable pretence
To bring an awkward hero in perforce ;
Since this our smith, for reasons never known,
To most society preferred his own.

TALES IN RHYME

Women declared that he'd an "Evil Eye,"—

This in a sense was true—he had but one ;
Men, on the other hand, alleged him shy :

We sometimes say so of the friends we shun ;
But, wrong or right, suffices to affirm it—
The Cyclops lived a veritable hermit,—

Dwelling below the cliff, beside the sea,
Caved like an ancient British Troglodyte,
Milking his goat at eve, and it may be,
Spearing the fish along the flats at night,
Until, at last, one April evening mild,
Came to the Inn a Lady and a Child.

The Lady was a nullity ; the Child
One of those bright bewitching little creatures,
Who, if she once but shyly looked and smiled,
Would soften out the ruggedest of features ;
Fragile and slight,—a very fay for size,—
With pale town-cheeks, and "clear germander
eyes."

Nurses, no doubt, might name her "somewhat
wild" ;

And pedants, possibly, pronounce her "slow" ;
Or corset-makers add, that for a child,

She needed "cultivation" ;—all I know
Is that whene'er she spoke, or laughed, or romped,
you

Felt in each act the beauty of impromptu.

A TALE OF POLYPHEME

The Lady was a nullity—a pale,
Nerveless and pulseless quasi-invalid,
Who, lest the ozone should in aught avail,
Remained religiously indoors to read ;
So that, in wandering at her will, the Child
Did, in reality, run “ somewhat wild.”

At first but peering at the sanded floor
And great shark jaw-bone in the cosy bar ;
Then watching idly from the dusky door,
The noisy advent of a coach or car ;
Then stealing out to wonder at the fate
Of blistered Ajax by the garden gate,—

Some old ship’s figure-head—until at last,
Straying with each excursion more and more,
She reached the limits of the road, and passed,
Plucking the pansies, downward to the shore,
And so, as you, respected Reader, showed,
Came to the smith’s “ desirable abode.”

There by the cave the occupant she found,
Weaving a crate ; and, with a gladsome cry,
The dog frisked out, although the Cyclops frowned
With all the terrors of his single eye ;
Then from a mound came running, too, the goat,
Uttering her plaintive, desultory note.

The Child stood wondering at the silent man,
Doubtful to go or stay, when presently
She felt a plucking, for the goat began
To crop the trail of twining briony

TALES IN RHYME

She held behind her ; so that, laughing, she
Turned her light steps, retreating, to the sea.

But the goat followed her on eager feet,
And therewithal an air so grave and mild,
Coupled with such 'a deprecatory bleat
Of injured confidence, that soon the Child
Filled the lone shore with louder merriment,
And e'en the Cyclops' heavy brow unbent.

Thus grew acquaintanceship between the pair,
The girl and goat ;—for thenceforth, day by day,
The Child would bring her four-foot friend such
fare

As might be gathered on the downward way :—
Foxglove or broom, and "yellow cytissus,"
Dear to all goats since Greek Theocritus.

But, for the Cyclops, that misogynist
Having, by stress of circumstances, smiled,
Felt it at least incumbent to resist
Further encroachment, and as one beguiled
By adverse fortune, with the half-door shut,
Dwelt in the dim seclusion of his hut.

And yet not less from thence he still must see
That daily coming, and must hear the goat
Bleating her welcome ; then, towards the sea,
The happy voices of the playmates float ;
Until at last, enduring it no more,
He took his wonted station by the door.

A TALE OF POLYPHEME

Here was, of course, a pitiful surrender ;

For soon the Child, on whom the Evil Eye
Seemed to exert an influence but slender,

Would run to question him, till, by and by,
His moody humour like a cloud dispersing,
He found himself uneasily conversing.

That was a sow's-ear, that an egg of skate,

And this an agate rounded by the wave.

Then came inquiries still more intimate

About himself, the anvil, and the cave ;
And then, at last, the Child, without alarm,
Would even spell the letters on his arm.

“ G—A—L—*Galatea*.” So there grew

On his part, like some half-remembered tale,
The new-found memory of an icebound crew,

And vague garrulities of spouting whale,—
Of sea-cow basking upon berg and floe,
And Polar light, and stunted Eskimo.

Till, in his heart, which hitherto had been

Locked as those frozen barriers of the North,
There came once more the season of the green,—

The tender bud-time and the putting forth ;
So that the man, before the new sensation,
Felt for the child a kind of adoration ;—

Rising by night, to search for shell and flower,

To lay in places where she found them first ;
Hoarding his cherished goat's milk for the hour

When those young lips might feel the summer's
thirst ;

TALES IN RHYME

Holding himself for all devotion paid
By that clear laughter of the little maid.

Dwelling, alas ! in that fond Paradise
Where no to-morrow quivers in suspense,—
Where scarce the changes of the sky suffice
To break the soft forgetfulness of sense,—
Where dreams become realities ; and where
I willingly would leave him—did I dare.

Yet for a little space it still endured,
Until, upon a day when least of all
The softened Cyclops, by his hopes assured,
Dreamed the inevitable blow could fall,
Came the stern moment that should all destroy,
Bringing a pert young cockerel of a Boy.

Middy, I think—he'd "*Acis*" on his box :—
A black-eyed, sun-burnt, mischief-making imp,
Pet of the mess,—a Puck with curling locks,
Who straightway travestied the Cyclops' limp,
And marvelled how his cousin so could care
For such a "one-eyed, melancholy Bear."

Thus there was war at once ; not overt yet,
For still the Child, unwilling, would not break
The new acquaintanceship, nor quite forget
The pleasant past ; while, for his treasure's
sake,
The boding smith with clumsy efforts tried
To win the laughing scorner to his side.

A TALE OF POLYPHEME

There are some sights pathetic ; none I know
More sad than this : to watch a slow-wrought
mind
Humbling itself, for love, to come and go
Before some petty tyrant of its kind ;
Saddest, ah !—saddest far,—when it can do
Naught to advance the end it has in view.

This was at least the Cyclops' case, until,
Whether the boy beguiled the Child away,
Or whether that limp Matron on the Hill
Woke from her novel-reading trance, one day
He waited long and wearily in vain,—
But, from that hour, they never came again.

Yet still he waited, hoping—wondering if
They still might come, or dreaming that he
heard
The sound of far-off voices on the cliff,
Or starting strangely when the she-goat stirred ;
But nothing broke the silence of the shore,
And, from that hour, the Child returned no
more.

Therefore our Cyclops sorrowed,—not as one
Who can command the gamut of despair ;
But as a man who feels his days are done,
So dead they seem,—so desolately bare ;
For, though he'd lived a hermit, 'twas but only
Now he discovered that his life was lonely.

TALES IN RHYME

The very sea seemed altered, and the shore ;
The very voices of the air were dumb ;
Time was an emptiness that o'er and o'er
Ticked with the dull pulsation "Will she
come ?"
So that he sat "consuming in a dream,"
Much like his old forerunner Polypheme.

Until there came the question, "Is she gone ?"
With such sad sick persistence that at last,
Urged by the hungry thought which drove him on,
Along the steep declivity he passed,
And by the summit panting stood, and still,
Just as the horn was sounding on the hill.

Then, in a dream, beside the "Dragon" door,
The smith saw travellers standing in the sun ;
Then came the horn again, and three or four
Looked idly at him from the roof, but One,—
A Child within,—suffused with sudden shame,
Thrust forth a hand, and called to him by name.

Thus the coach vanished from his sight, but he
Limped back with bitter pleasure in his pain ;
He was not all forgotten—could it be ?
And yet the knowledge made the memory
vain ;
And then—he felt a pressure in his throat,
So, for that night, forgot to milk his goat.

A TALE OF POLYPHEME

What then might come of silent misery,
What new resolvings then might intervene,
I know not. Only, with the morning sky,
The goat stood tethered on the "Dragon"
green,
And those who, wondering, questioned thereupon,
Found the hut empty,—for the man was gone.

TALES IN RHYME

A STORY FROM A DICTIONARY

*"Sic visum Veneri? cui placet impares
Formas atque animos sub juga ænea
Sacro mittere cum joco."*—HOR. i. 33.

"**L**OVE mocks us all"—as Horace said of old :
From sheer perversity, that arch-offender
Still yokes unequally the hot and cold,
The short and tall, the hardened and the tender ;
He bids a Socrates espouse a scold,
And makes a Hercules forget his gender :—
Sic visum Veneri! Lest samples fail,
I add a fresh one from the page of BAYLE.

It was in Athens that the thing occurred,
In the last days of Alexander's rule,
While yet in Grove or Portico was heard
The studious murmur of its learned school ;—
Nay, 'tis one favoured of Minerva's bird
Who plays therein the hero (or the fool)
With a Megarian, who must then have been
A maid, and beautiful, and just eighteen.

I shan't describe her. Beauty is the same
In Anno Domini as erst B.C. ;
The type is still that witching One who came,
Between the furrows, from the bitter sea ;

A STORY "FROM A DICTIONARY

'Tis but to shift accessories and frame,
And this our heroine in a trice would be,
Save that she wore a *peplum* and a *chiton*,
Like any modern on the beach at Brighton.

Stay, I forget ! Of course the sequel shows
She had some qualities of disposition,
To which, in general, her sex are foes,—
As strange proclivities to erudition,
And lore unfeminine, reserved for those
Who nowadays descant on "Woman's Mission,"
Or tread instead that "primrose path" to know-
ledge,
That milder Academe—the Girton College.

The truth is, she admired . . . a learned man.
There were no curates in that sunny Greece,
For whom the mind emotional could plan
Fine-art habiliments in gold and fleece ;
(This was ere chasuble or cope began
To shake the centres of domestic peace ;)
So that "admiring," such as maids give way to,
Turned to the ranks of Zeno and of Plato.

The "object" here was mildly prepossessing,
At least, regarded in a woman's sense ;
His *forte*, it seems, lay chiefly in expressing
Disputed fact in Attic eloquence ;
His ways were primitive ; and as to dressing,
His toilet was a negative pretence ;
He kept, besides, the *régime* of the Stoic ;—
In short, was not, by any means, "heroic."

TALES IN RHYME

Sic visum Veneri!—The thing is clear.

Her friends were furious, her lovers nettled ;
'Twas much as though the Lady Vere de Vere
On some hedge-schoolmaster her heart had
settled.

Unheard ! Intolerable !—a lumbering steer
To plod the upland with a mare high-mettled !—
They would, no doubt, with far more pleasure
hand her
To curled Euphorion or Anaximander.

And so they used due discipline, of course,
To lead to reason this most erring daughter,
Proceeding even to extremes of force,—
Confinement (solitary), and bread and water ;
Then, having lectured her till they were hoarse,
Finding that this to no submission brought her,
At last, (unwisely¹) to the man they sent,
That he might combat her by argument.

Being, they fancied, but a bloodless thing ;
Or else too well forewarned of that commotion
Which poets feign inseparable from Spring
To suffer danger from a school-girl notion ;
Also they hoped that she might find her king,
On close inspection, clumsy and Bœotian :—
This was acute enough, and yet, between us,
I think they thought too little about Venus.

¹ "Unwisely," surely. But 'tis well to mention
That this particular is *not* invention.

A STORY FROM A DICTIONARY

Something, I know, of this sort is related
In Garrick's life. However, the man came,
And taking first his mission's end as stated,
Began at once her sentiments to tame,
Working discreetly to the point debated
By steps rhetorical I spare to name ;
In other words,—he broke the matter gently.
Meanwhile, the lady looked at him intently,

Wistfully, sadly,—and it put him out,
Although he went on steadily, but faster.
There were some maladies he'd read about
Which seemed, at first, most difficult to master ;
They looked intractable at times, no doubt,
But all they needed was a little plaster ;
This was a thing physicians long had pondered,
Considered, weighed . . . and then . . . and
then he wandered.

('Tis so embarrassing to have before you
A silent auditor, with candid eyes ;
With lips that speak no sentence to restore you,
And aspect, generally, of pained surprise ;
Then, if we add that all these things adore you,
Tis really difficult to syllogise :—
Of course it mattered not to him a feather,
But still he wished . . . they'd not been left
together.)

“Of one,” he said, continuing, “of these
The young especially should be suspicious ;
Seeing no ailment in Hippocrates
Could be at once so tedious and capricious ;

TALES IN RHYME

No seeming apple of Hesperides ,

More fatal, deadlier, and more delicious—
Pernicious,—he should say,—for all its seem-
ing . . .”

It seemed to him he simply was blaspheming.

If she had only turned askance, or uttered

Word in reply, or trifled with her brooch,
Or sighed, or cried, grown petulant, or fluttered,
He might (in metaphor) have “ called his coach”;
Yet still, while patiently he hemmed and stuttered,
She wore her look of wondering reproach ;
(And those who read the “ Shakespeare of Ro-
mances ”

Know of what stuff a girl’s “ dynamic glance ” is.)

“ But there was still a cure, the wise insisted,

In Love,—or rather, in ‘Philosophy,
Philosophy—no, Love—at best existed

But as an ill for that to remedy :
There was no knot so intricately twisted,
There was no riddle but at last should be
By Love—he meant Philosophy—resolved . . .”
The truth is, he was getting quite involved.

O sovran Love ! how far thy power surpasses
Aught that is taught of Logic or the Schools !

Here was a man, “ far seen ” in all the classes,
Strengthened of precept, fortified of rules,
Mute as the least articulate of asses ;

Nay, at an age when every passion cools,
Conscious of nothing but a sudden yearning
Stronger by far than any force of learning !

A STORY FROM A DICTIONARY

Therefore he changed his tone, flung down his wallet,

Described his lot, how pitiable and poor ;
The hut of mud,—the miserable pallet,—

The alms solicited from door to door ;
The scanty fare of bitter bread and sallet,—

Could she this shame,—this poverty endure ?
I scarcely think he knew what he was doing,
But that last line had quite a touch of wooing.

And so she answered him,—those early Greeks
Took little care to keep concealment preying
At any length upon their damask cheeks,—

She answered him by very simply saying,
She could and would :—and said it as one
speaks

Who takes no course without much careful
weighing. . . .

Was this, perchance, the answer that he hoped ?
It might, or might not be. But they eloped.

Sought the free pine-wood and the larger air,—

The leafy sanctuaries, remote and inner,
Where the great heart of nature, beating bare,

Receives benignantly both saint and sinner ;—
Leaving propriety to gasp and stare,

And shake its head, like Burleigh, after dinner,
From pure incompetence to mar or mend them :
They fled and wed ;—though, mind, I don't defend
them.

TALES IN RHYME

I don't defend them. 'Twas a serious act,
No doubt too much determined by the senses ;
(Alas ! when these affinities attract,
We lose the future in the present tenses !)
Besides, the least establishment's a fact
Involving nice adjustment of expenses ;
Moreover, too, reflection should reveal
That not remote contingent—*la famille*.

Yet these, maybe, were happy in their lot.
Milton has said (and surely Milton knows)
That, after all, philosophy is “ not,—
Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose ; ”
And some, no doubt, for Love's sake have forgot
Much that is needful in this world of prose :—
Perchance 'twas so with these. But who shall say ?
•Time has long since swept them and theirs away.

THE WATER-CURE

THE WATER-CURE

A TALE : IN THE MANNER OF PRIOR

“ — *portentaque Thessala rides ?* ”

—HOR.

“ — *Thessalian portents do you flout ?* ”

* *

CARDENIO'S fortunes ne'er miscarried
Until the day CARDENIO married.
What then ? the Nymph no doubt was young ?
She was : but yet—she had a tongue !
Most women have, you seem to say.
I grant it—in a different way.

'Twas not that organ half-divine,
With which, Dear Friend, your spouse or mine,
What time we seek our nightly pillows,
Rebukes our easy peccadilloes :
'Twas not so tuneful, so composing ;
'Twas louder and less often dozing ;
At *Ombre*, *Basset*, *Loo*, *Quadrille*,
You heard it resonant and shrill ;
You heard it rising, rising yet
Beyond SELINDA'S parroquet ;

TALES IN RHYME

You heard it rival and outdo
The chair-men and the link-boy too ;
In short, wherever lungs perform,
Like MARLBOROUGH, it rode the storm.

So uncontrolled it came to be
CARDENIO feared† his *chère amie*
(Like ECHO by *Cephiſſus* shore)
Would turn to voice and nothing more.

That ('tis conceded) must be cured
Which can't by practice be endured.
CARDENIO, though he loved the maid,
Grew daily more and more afraid ;
And since advice could not prevail
(Reproof but seemed to fan the gale),
A prudent man, he cast about
To find some fitting nostrum out.
What need to say that priceless drug
Had not in any mine been dug ?
What need to say no skilful leech
Could check that plethora of speech ?
Suffice it, that one lucky day
CARDENIO tried—another way.

A Hermit (there were hermits then ;
The most accessible of men !)
Near *Vauxhall's* sacred shade resided ;
In him, at length, our friend confided.
(Simples, for show, he used to sell ;
But cast *Nativities* as well.)
Consulted, he looked wondrous wise ;
Then undertook the enterprise.

THE WATER-CURE

What that might be, the Muse must spare :
To tell the truth, she was not there.
She scorns to patch what she ignores
With *Similes* and *Metaphors* ;
And so, in short, to change the scene,
She slips a fortnight in between.

Behold our pair then (quite by chance !)
In *Vauxhall's* garden of romance,—
That paradise of nymphs and grottoes,
Of fans, and fiddles, and ridottoes !
What wonder if, the lamps reviewed,
The song encored, the maze pursued,
No further feat could seem more pat
Than seek the Hermit after that ?
Who then more keen her fate to see
Than this, the new LEUCONŒ,
On fire to learn the lore forbidden
In Babylonian numbers hidden ?
Forthwith they took the darkling road
To ALBUMAZAR his abode.

Arriving, they beheld the sage
Intent on hieroglyphic page,
In high *Armenian* cap arrayed,
And girt with engines of his trade ;
(As *Skeletons*, and *Spheres*, and *Cubes* ;
As *Amulets* and *Optic Tubes* ;)
With dusky depths behind revealing
Strange shapes that dangled from the ceiling ;
While more to palsy the beholder
A Black Cat sat upon his shoulder.

TALES IN RHYME

The Hermit eyed the Lady o'er
As one whose face he'd seen before ;
And then, with agitated looks,
He fell to fumbling at his books.

CARDENIO felt his spouse was frightened,
Her grasp upon his arm had tightened ;
Judge then her horror and her dread
When " Vox Stellarum " shook his head ;
Then darkly spake in phrase forlorn
Of *Taurus* and of *Capricorn* ;
Of stars averse, and stars ascendant,
And stars entirely independent ;
In fact, it seemed that all the Heavens
Were set at sixes and at sevens,
Portending, in her case, some fate
Too fearful to prognosticate.

Meanwhile the Dame was well-nigh dead.
" But is there naught," CARDENIO said,
" No sign or token, Sage, to show
From whence, or what, this dismal woe ? "

The Sage, with circle and with plane,
Betook him to his charts again.
" It vaguely seems to threaten Speech :
No more (he said) the signs can teach. "

But still CARDENIO tried once more :
" Is there no potion in your store,
No charm by *Chaldee* mage concerted
By which this doom can be averted ? "

THE WATER-CURE

The Sage, with motion doubly mystic,
Resumed his juggling cabalistic.
The aspects here again were various ;
But seemed to indicate *Aquarius*.
Thereat portentously he frowned ;
Then frowned again, then smiled ;—’twas found !
But ’twas too simple to be tried.
“ What is it, then ? ” at once they cried.

“ Whene’er by chance you feel incited
To speak at length, or uninvited ;
Whene’er you feel your tones grow shrill
(At times, we know, the softest will !),
This word oracular, my Daughter,
Bids you to fill your mouth with water :
Further, to hold it firm and fast,
Until the danger be o’erpast.”

The Dame, by this in part relieved,
The prospect of escape perceived,
Rebelled a little at the diet.
CARDENIO said discreetly, “ Try it,
Try it, my Own. You have no choice,
What if you lose your charming voice ! ”
She tried, it seems. And whether then
Some god stepped in, benign to men ;
Or Modesty, too long outlawed,
Contrived to aid the pious fraud,
I know not :—but from that same day
She talked in quite a different way.

TALES IN RHYME

THE NOBLE PATRON

*“ Ce sont les amours
Que font les beaux jours.”*

WHAT is a *Patron*? JOHNSON knew,
And well that lifelike portrait drew.
*He is a Patron who looks down
With careless eye on men who drown;
But if they chance to reach the land,
Encumbers them with helping hand.*
Ah! happy we whose artless rhyme
No longer now must creep to climb!
Ah! happy we of later days,
Who 'scape those *Caudine Forks* of praise!
Whose votive page may dare commend
A Brother, or a private Friend!
Not so it fared with scribbling man,
As POPE says, “under my Queen ANNE.”

DICK DOVECOT (this was long, be sure,
Ere he attained his *Wiltshire* cure,
And settled down, like humbler folks,
To cowslip wine and country jokes)
Once hoped—as who will not?—for fame,
And dreamed of honours and a Name.
A fresh-cheeked lad, he came to Town
In homespun hose and russet brown,

THE NOBLE PATRON

But armed at point with every view
Enforced in RAPIN and BOSSU,
Besides a stout portfolio ripe
For LINTOT'S or for TONSON'S type.
He went the rounds, saw all the *signs*,
Dropped in at *Will's* and *Tom's* *sign*,
Heard BURNET preach, saw BICKNELL dance,
E'en gained from ADDISON a glance ;
Nay, once, to make his bliss complete,
He supped with STEELE in *Bury Street*.
('Tis true the feast was half by stealth :
PRUE was in bed : they drank her health.)

By this his purse was running low,
And he must either print or go.
He went to TONSON. TONSON said—
Well! TONSON hummed and shook his
head ;
Deplored the times ; abused the Town ;
But thought—at length—it might go down ;
With aid, of course, of *Elzevir*,
And *Prologue* to a Prince, or Peer.
Dick winced at this, for adulation
Was scarce that candid youth's vocation :
Nor did he deem his rustic lays
Required a *Coronet* for *Bays*.
But there—the choice was that, or none.
The Lord was found ; the thing was done.
With HORACE and with TOOKE'S *Pantheon*,
He penned his tributary pæan ;
Despatched his gift, nor waited long
The meed of his ingenuous song.

TALES IN RHYME

Ere two days passed, a hackney chair
Brought a pert spark with languid air,
A lace cravat about his throat,—
Brocaded gown,—*en papillotes*,
("My Lord himself," quoth DICK, "at least!"
But no, 'twas that "inferior priest,"
His Lordship's man.) He held a card :
My Lord (it said) would see the Bard.

The day arrived ; Dick went, was shown
Into an anteroom, alone—
A great gilt room with mirrored door,
Festoons of flowers and marble floor,
Whose lavish splendours made him look
More shabby than a sheepskin book.
(His own book—by the way—he spied
On a far table, toss'd aside.)

DICK waited, as they only wait
Who haunt the chambers of the Great.
He heard the chairmen come and go ;
He heard the Porter yawn below ;
Beyond him, in the Grand Saloon,
He heard the silver stroke of noon,
And thought how at this very time
The old church clock at home would chime.
Dear heart, how plain he saw it all !
The lich-gate and the crumbling wall,
The stream, the pathway to the wood,
The bridge where they so oft had stood.
Then, in a trice, both church and clock
Vanished before . . . a shuttlecock.

THE NOBLE PATRON

A shuttlecock ! And following slow
The zigzag of its to-and-fro,
And so intent upon its flight
She neither looked to left nor right,
Came a tall girl with floating hair,
Light as a wood-nymph, and as fair.

O Dea certé!—thought poor DICK,
And thereupon his memories quick
Ran back to her who flung the ball
In HOMER's page, and next to all
The dancing maids that bards have sung ;
Lastly to One at home, as young,
As fresh, as light of foot, and glad,
Who, when he went, had seemed so sad.
O Dea certé! (Still, he stirred
Nor hand nor foot, nor uttered word.)

Meanwhile the shuttlecock in air
Went darting gaily here and there ;
Now crossed a mirror's face, and next
Shot up amidst the sprawled, perplexed
Olympus overhead. At last,
Jerked sidelong by a random cast,
The striker missed it, and it fell
Plump on the book DICK knew so well.

(If he had thought to speak or bow,
Judge if he moved a muscle now !)

TALES IN RHYME

The player paused, bent down to look,
Lifted a cover of the book ;
Pished at the Prologue, passed it o'er,
Went forward for a page or more
(*Asem and Asa* : DICK could trace
Almost the passage and the place) ;
Then for a moment with bent head
Rested upon her hand and read.
(DICK thought once more how Cousin CIS
Used when she read to lean like this ;—
“ Used when she *read*,”—why, CIS could say
All he had written,—any day !)

Sudden was heard a hurrying tread ;
The great doors creaked. The reader fled.
Forth came a crowd with muffled laughter,
A waft of Bergamot, and after,
His Chaplain smirking at his side,
My Lord himself in all his pride—
A portly shape in stars and lace,
With wine-bag cheeks and vacant face.

DICK bowed and smiled. The Great Man
stared,
With look half puzzled and half scared ;
Then seemed to recollect, turned round,
And mumbled some imperfect sound :
A moment more, his coach of state
Dipped on its springs beneath his weight ;
And DICK, who followed at his heels,
Heard but the din of rolling wheels.

THE NOBLE PATRON

Away, too, all his dreams had rolled ;
And yet they left him half consoled :
Fame, after all, he thought, might wait.
Would CIs ? Suppose he were too late !
Ten months he'd lost in Town—an age !

Next day he took the *Wiltshire* Stage.

VERS DE SOCIÉTÉ

“ Apollineæ bellum puerile pharetræ.”

A CITY FLOWER

“ Il y a des fleurs animées.”

—POLITE COLLOQUIALISM.

TO and fro in the City I go,
Tired of the ceaseless ebb and flow,
Sick of the crowded mart ;
Tired of the din and rattle of wheels,
Sick of the dust as one who feels
The dust is over his heart.

And again and again, as the sunlight wanes,
I think of the lights in the leafy lanes,
With the bits of blue between ;
And when about Rimmel's the perfumes play,
I smell no vapours of “ Ess Bouquet,”
But violets hid in the green ;
And I love—how I love—the plants that fill
The pots on my dust-dry window-sill,—
A sensitive sickly crop,—
But a flower that charms me more, I think,
Than cowslip, or crocus, or rose, or pink,
Blooms—in a milliner's shop.

Hazel eyes that wickedly peep,
Flash, abash, and suddenly sleep
Under the lids drawn in ;

VERS DE SOCIÉTÉ

Ripple of hair that rioteth out,
Mouth with a half-born smile and a pout,
 And a baby breadth of chin ;
Hands that light as the lighting bird,
On the bloom-bent bough, and the bough is stirred
 With a delicate ecstasy ;
Fingers tipped with a roseate flush,
Flicking and flirting a feathery brush
 Over the papery bonnetry ;—
Till the gauzy rose begins to glow,
And the gauzy hyacinths break and blow,
 And the dusty grape grows red ;
And the flaunting grasses seem to say,
“ Do we look like ornaments—tell us, we pray—
 Fit for a lady’s head ? ”
And the butterfly wakes to a wiry life,
Like an elderly gentleman taking a wife,
 Knowing he must be gay ;
And all the bonnets nid-noddle about,
Like chattering chaperons set at a rout,
 Quarrelling over their play.

How can I otherwise choose than look
At the beautiful face like a beautiful book,
 And learn a tiny part ?
So I feel somehow that every day
Some flake of the dust is brushed away
 That had settled over my heart.

INCOGNITA

INCOGNITA

JUST for a space that I met her—
Just for a day in the train !
It began when she feared it would wet her,
That tiniest spurtle of rain :
So we tucked a great rug in the sashes,
And carefully padded the pane ;
And I sorrow in sackcloth and ashes,
Longing to do it again !

Then it grew when she begged me to reach her
A dressing-case under the seat ;
She was " really so tiny a creature,
That she needed a stool for her feet ! "
Which was promptly arranged to her order
With a care that was even minute,
And a glimpse—of an open-work border,
And a glance—of the fairiest boot.

Then it drooped, and revived at some hovels—
" Were they houses for men or for pigs ? "
Then it shifted to muscular novels,
With a little digression on prigs :
She thought " Wives and Daughters " " so jolly " ;
" Had I read it ? " She knew when I had,
Like the rest, I should dote upon " Molly " ;
And " poor Mrs. Gaskell—how sad ! "

VERS DE SOCIÉTÉ

“Like Browning?” “But so-so.” His proof lay
Too deep for her frivolous mood,
That preferred your mere metrical *soufflé*
To the stronger poetical food;
Yet at times he was good—“as a tonic”:
Was Tennyson writing just now?
And was this new poet Byronic
And clever, and naughty, or how?

Then we trifled with concerts and croquet,
Then she daintily dusted her face;
Then she sprinkled herself with “Ess Bouquet,”
Fished out from the foregoing case;
And we chattered of Gassier and Grisi,
And voted Aunt Sally a bore;
Discussed if the tight rope were easy,
Or Chopin much harder than Spohr.

And oh! the odd things that she quoted,
With the prettiest possible look,
And the price of two buns that she noted
In the prettiest possible book;
While her talk like a musical rillet
Flashed on with the hours that flew;
And the carriage, her smile seemed to fill it
With just enough summer—for Two.

Till at last in her corner, peeping
From a nest of rugs and of furs,
With the white shut eyelids sleeping
On those dangerous looks of hers,

INCOGNITA

She seemed like a snow-drop breaking,
Not wholly alive nor dead,
But with one blind impulse making
To the sounds of the spring overhead ;

And I watched in the lamplight's swerving
The shade of the down-dropt lid,
And the lip-line's delicate curving,
Where a slumbering smile lay hid,
Till I longed that, rather than sever,
The train should shriek into space,
And carry us onward—for ever,—
Me and that beautiful face.

But she suddenly woke in a fidget,
With fears she was "nearly at home,"
And talk of a certain Aunt Bridget,
Whom I mentally wished—well, at Rome ;
Got out at the very next station,
Looking back with a merry *Bon Soir* ;
Adding, too, to my utter vexation,
A surplus, unkind *Au Revoir*.

So left me to muse on her graces,
To doze and to muse, till I dreamed
That we sailed through the sunniest places
In a glorified galley, it seemed ;
But the cabin was made of a carriage,
And the ocean was Eau-de-Cologne,
And we split on a rock labelled MARRIAGE,
And I woke,—as cold as a stone.

VERS DE SOCIÉTÉ

And that's how I lost her—a jewel,
 Incognita—one in a crowd,
Not prudent enough to be cruel,
 Not worldly enough to be proud.
It was just a shut lid and its lashes,
 Just a few hours in a train,
And I sorrow in sackcloth and ashes,
 Longing to see her again.

DORA VERSUS ROSE

DORA VERSUS ROSE

"The Case is proceeding."

FROM the tragic-est novels at Mudie's—
At least, on a practical plan—
To the tales of mere Hodges and Judys,
One love is enough for a man.
But no case that I ever yet met is
Like mine : I am equally fond
Of Rose, who a charming brunette is,
And Dora, a blonde.

Each rivals the other in powers—
Each waltzes, each warbles, each paints—
Miss Rose, chiefly tumble-down towers ;
Miss Do.; perpendicular saints.
In short, to distinguish is folly ;
'Twixt the pair I am come to the pass
Of Macheath, between Lucy and Polly,—
Or Buridan's ass.

If it happens that Rosa I've singled
For a soft celebration in rhyme,
Then the ringlets of Dora get mingled
Somehow with the tune and the time ;

VERS DE SOCIÉTÉ

Or I painfully pen me a sonnet
To an eyebrow intended for Do.'s,
And behold I am writing upon it
The legend "To Rose."

Or I try to draw Dora (my blotter
Is all overscrawled with her head),
If I fancy at last that I've got her,
It turns to her rival instead ;
Or I find myself placidly adding
To the rapturous tresses of Rose
Miss Dora's bud-mouth, and her madding,
Ineffable nose.

Was there ever so sad a dilemma ?
For Rose I would perish (*pro tem.*) ;
For Dora I'd willingly stem a—
(Whatever might offer to stem) ;
But to make the invidious election,—
To declare that on either one's side
I've a scruple,—a grain, more affection,
I *cannot* decide.

And, as either so hopelessly nice is,
My sole and my final resource
Is to wait some indefinite crisis,—
Some feat of molecular force,
To solve me this riddle conducive
By no means to peace or repose,
Since the issue can scarce be inclusive
Of Dora *and* Rose.

DORA VERSUS ROSE

• (*Afterthought.*)

But, perhaps, if a third (say a Norah),
Not quite so delightful as Rose,—
Not wholly so charming as Dora,—
Should appear, is it wrong to suppose,—
As the claims of the others are equal,—
And flight—in the main—is the best,—
That I might . . . But no matter,—the sequel
Is easily guessed.

VERS DE SOCIÉTÉ

AD ROSAM

*“Mitte sectari, ROSA quo locorum
Sera moretur.”—HOR. I. 38.*

I HAD a vacant dwelling—
Where situated, I,
As naught can serve the telling,
Decline to specify ;—
Enough 'twas neither haunted,
Entailed, nor out of date ;
I put up “Tenant Wanted,”
And left the rest to Fate.

Then, Rose, you passed the window,—
I see you passing yet,—
Ah, what could I within do,
When, Rose, our glances met !
You snared me, Rose, with ribbons,
Your rose-mouth made me thrall,
Brief—briefer far than Gibbon's,
Was my “Decline and Fall.”

I heard the summons spoken
That all hear—king and clown :
You smiled—the ice was broken ;
You stopped—the bill was down.

AD ROSAM

How blind we are ! It never
Occurred to me to seek
If you had come for ever,
Or only for a week.

The words your voice neglected,
Seemed written in your eyes ;
The thought your heart protected,
Your cheek told, missal-wise ;—
I read the rubric plainly
As any Expert could ;
In short, we dreamed,—insanely,
As only lovers should.

I broke the tall C  none,
That then my chambers graced,
Because she seemed “ too bony,”
To suit your purist taste ;
And you, without vexation,
May certainly confess
Some graceful approbation,
Designed *   mon adresse*.

.

You liked me then, *carina*,—
You liked me then, I think ;
For your sake gall had been a
Mere tonic-cup to drink ;
For your sake, bonds were trivial,
The rack, a *tour-de-force* ;
And banishment, convivial,—
You coming too, of course.

VERS DE SOCIÉTÉ

Then, Rose, a word in jest meant
Would throw you in a state
That no well-timed investment
Could quite alleviate ;
Beyond a Paris trousseau
You prized my smile, I know ;
I, yours—ah, more than Rousseau
The lip of d'Houdetot.

Then, Rose,—But why pursue it ?
When Fate begins to frown
Best write the final “*fruit*,”
And gulp the physic down.
And yet,—and yet, that only,
The song should end with this :—
You left me,—left me lonely,
Rosa mutabilis !

Left me, with Time for Mentor,
(A dreary *tête-à-tête !*)
To pen my “Last Lament,” or
Extemporize to Fate,
In blankest verse disclosing
My bitterness of mind,—
Which is, I learn, composing
In cases of the kind.

No, Rose. Though you refuse me,
Culture the pang prevents ;
“I am not made”—excuse me—
“Of so slight elements ;”

AD ROSAM

I leave to common lovers
The hemlock or the hood ;
My rarer soul recovers
In dreams of public good.

The Roses of this nation—
Or so I understand
From careful computation—
Exceed the gross demand ;
And, therefore, in civility
To maids that can't be matched,
No man of sensibility
Should linger unattached.

So, without further fashion—
A modern Curtius,
Plunging, from pure compassion,
To aid the overplus,—
I sit down, sad—not daunted,
And, in my weeds, begin
A new card—"Tenant Wanted ;
Particulars within."

VERS DE SOCIÉTÉ

OUTWARD BOUND

(HORACE, III. 7)

*“ Quid fles, Asterie, quem tibi candidi
Primo restituent vere Favonii . . .
Gygen ? ”*

COME, Laura, patience. Time and Spring
Your absent Arthur back shall bring,
Enriched with many an Indian thing
Once more to woo you ;
Him neither wind nor wave can check,
Who, cramped beneath the “ Simla’s ” deck,
Still constant, though with stiffened neck,
Makes verses to you.

Would it were wave and wind alone !
The terrors of the torrid zone,
The indiscriminate cyclone,
A man might parry ;
But only faith, or “ triple brass,”
Can help the “ outward-bound ” to pass
Safe through that eastward-faring class
Who sail to marry.

For him fond mothers, stout and fair,
Ascend the tortuous cabin stair
Only to hold around his chair
Insidious sessions ;

OUTWARD BOUND

For him the eyes of daughters droop
Across the plate of handed soup,
Suggesting seats upon the poop,
And soft confessions.

Nor are these all his pains, nor most.
Romancing captains cease to boast—
Loud majors leave their whist—to roast
The youthful griffin ;
All, all with pleased persistence show
His fate,—“ remote, unfriended, slow,”—
His “ melancholy ” bungalow,—
His lonely tiffin.

In vain. Let doubts assail the weak ;
Unmoved and calm as “ Adam’s Peak,”
Your “ blameless Arthur ” hears them speak
Of woes that wait him ;
Naught can subdue his soul secure ;
“ Arthur will come again,” be sure,
Though matron shrewd and maid mature
Conspire to mate him.

But, Laura, on your side, forbear
To greet with too impressed an air
A certain youth with chestnut hair,—
A youth unstable ;
Albeit none more skilled can guide
The frail canoe on Thamiz tide,
Or, trimmer-footed, lighter glide
Through “ Guards ” or “ Mabel.”

VERS DE SOCIÉTÉ .

Be warned in time. Without a trace
Of acquiescence on your face,
Hear, in the waltz's breathing-space,
His airy patter ;
Avoid the confidential nook ;
If, when you sing, you find his look
Grow tender, close your music-book,
And end the matter.

IN THE ROYAL ACADEMY

IN THE ROYAL ACADEMY

HUGH (*on furlough*).

HELEN (*his cousin*).

HELEN.

THEY have not come! And ten is past,—
Unless, by chance, my watch is fast;
—Aunt Mabel surely told us “ten.”

HUGH.

I doubt if she can do it, then.
In fact, their train . . .

HELEN.

That is,—you knew.
How could you be so treacherous, Hugh?

HUGH.

Nay ;—it is scarcely mine, the crime,
One can't account for railway-time!
Where shall we sit? Not here, I vote ;—
At least, there's nothing here of note.

VERS DE SOCIÉTÉ

HELEN.

Then *here* we'll stay, please. Once for all,
I bar all artists,—great and small !
From now until we go in June
I shall hear nothing but this tune :—
Whether I like Long's "Vashti," or
Like Leslie's "Naughty Kitty" more ;
With all that critics, right or wrong,
Have said of Leslie and of Long
No. If you value my esteem,
I beg you'll take another theme ;
Paint me some pictures, if you will,
But spare me these, for good and ill

HUGH.

"Paint you some pictures!" Come, that's kind!
You know I'm nearly colour-blind.

HELEN.

Paint then, in words. You did before ;
Scenes at—where was it? Dustypoor?
You know

HUGH (*with an inspiration*).

I'll try.

HELEN.

But mind they're pretty,
Not "hog hunts."

IN THE ROYAL ACADEMY

HUGH.

You shall be Committee,
And say if they are "out" or "in."

HELEN.

I shall reject them all. Begin.

HUGH.

Here is the first. An antique Hall
(Like Chanticleere) with panelled wall.
A boy, or rather lad. A girl,
Laughing with all her rows of pearl
Before a portrait in a ruff.
He meanwhile watches

HELEN.

That's enough,
It wants "*verve*," "*brio*," "breadth," "design," . .
Besides, it's English. I decline.

HUGH.

This is the next. 'Tis finer far :
A foaming torrent (say Braemar).
A pony grazing by a boulder,
Then the same pair, a little older,
Left by some lucky chance together.
He begs her for a sprig of heather

VERS DE SOCIÉTÉ

HELEN.

—"Which she accords with smile seraphic."
I know it,—it was in the "Graphic."
Declined.

HUGH.

Once more, and I forego
All hopes of hanging, high or low :
Behold the hero of the scene,
In bungalow and palankeen

HELEN.

What !—all at once ! But that's absurd ;—
Unless he's Sir Boyle Roche's bird !

HUGH.

Permit me—'Tis a Panorama,
In which the person of the drama,
Mid orientals dusk and tawny,
Mid warriors drinking brandy pawnee,
Mid scorpions, dowagers, and griffins,
In morning rides, at noonday tiffins,
In every kind of place and weather,
Is solaced by a sprig of heather.

(More seriously.)

He puts that faded scrap before
The "Rajah," or the "Koh-i-noor"
He would not barter it for all
Benares, or the Taj-Mahal . .

IN THE ROYAL ACADEMY

It guides,—directs his every act,
And word, and thought—In short—in fact—
I mean

(Opening his lockèt.)

Look, Helen, that's the heather !
(Too late ! Here come both Aunts together.)

HELEN.

What heather, Sir ?

(After a pause.)

And why “too late ?”
—Aunt Dora, how you've made us wait !
Don't you agree that it's a pity
Portraits are hung by the Committee ?

VERS DE SOCIÉTÉ

THE LAST DESPATCH

HURRAH! the Season's past at last ;
At length we've "done" our pleasure.
Dear "Pater," if you *only* knew
How much I've *longed* for home and you,—
Our own green lawn and leisure !

And then the pets ! One half forgets
' The dear dumb friends—in Babel.
I hope my special fish is fed ;—
I long to see poor Nigra's head
Pushed at me from the stable !

I long to see the cob and "Rob,"—
Old Bevis and the Collie ;
And *won't* we read in "Traveller's Rest" !
Home readings after all are best ;—
None else seem half so "jolly !" !

One misses your dear kindly store
Of fancies quaint and funny ;
One misses, too, your kind *bon-mot* ;—
The Mayfair wit I mostly know
Has more of gall than honey !

THE LAST DESPATCH

How tired one grows of "calfs and balls" !
This "*toujours perdrix*" wearies ;
I'm longing, quite, for "Notes on Knox" ;
(*Apropos*, I've the loveliest box
For holding *Notes and Queries* !)

A change of place would suit my case.
You'll take me ?—on probation ?
As "Lady-help," then, let it be ;
I feel (as Lavender shall see),
That Jams are *my* vocation !

How's Lavender ? My love to her.
Does Briggs still flirt with Flowers ?—
Has Hawthorn stubbed the common clear ?—
You'll let me give *some* picnics, Dear,
And ask the Vanes and Towers ?

I met Belle Vane. "HE's" still in Spain !
Sir John won't let them marry.
Aunt drove the boys to Brompton Rink ;
And Charley,—changing Charley,—think,
Is now *au mieux* with Carry !

And no. You know what "No" I mean—
There's no one yet at present :
The Benedick I have in view
Must be a something wholly new,—
One's father's *far* too pleasant.

VERS DE SOCIÉTÉ

So hey, I say,* for home and you !
Good-bye to Piccadilly ;^c
Balls, beaux, and Bolton-row, adieu !
Expect me, Dear, at half-past two ;
Till then,—your Own Fond—MILLY.

“PREMIERS AMOURS”

“PREMIERS AMOURS”

*Old Loves and old dreams,—
“Requiescant in pace.”
How strange now it seems,—
“Old” Loves and “old” dreams!
Yet we once wrote you reams,
Maude, Alice, and Gracie!
Old Loves and old dreams,—
“Requiescant in pace.”*

WHEN I called at the “Hollies” to-day,
In the room with the cedar-wood presses,
Aunt Deb. was just folding away
What she calls her “memorial dresses.”

She'd the frock that she wore at fifteen,—
Short-waisted, of course—my abhorrence;
She'd “the loveliest”—something in “een”
That she wears in her portrait by Lawrence;

She'd the “jelick” she used—“as a Greek,” (!)
She'd the habit she got her bad fall in;
She had e'en the blue *moiré antique*
That she opened Squire Grasshopper's ball in:—

New and old they were all of them there:—
Sleek velvet and bombazine stately,—
She had hung them each over a chair
To the “*paniers*” she's taken to lately

VERS DE SOCIÉTÉ

(Which she showed me, I think, by mistake).

And I conned o'er the forms and the fashions, *
Till the faded old shapes seemed to wake
All the ghosts of my passed-away "passions";—

From the days of love's youthfullest dream,
When the height of my shooting idea
Was to burn, like a young Polypheme,
For a somewhat mature Galatea.

There was Lucy, who "tiffed" with her first,
And who threw me as soon as her third came;
There was Norah, whose cut was the worst,
For she told me to wait till my "berd" came;

Pale Blanche, who subsisted on salts;
Blonde Bertha, who doted on Schiller;
Poor Amy, who taught me to waltz;
Plain Ann, that I wooed for the "siller";—

All danced round my head in a ring,
Like "The Zephyrs" that somebody painted,
All shapes of the feminine thing—
Shy, scornful, seductive, and sainted,—

To my Wife, in the days she was young . .
"How, Sir," says that lady, disgusted,
"Do you dare to include ME among
Your loves that have faded and rusted?"

“PREMIERS AMOURS”

“Not at all!”—I benignly retort.

(I was just ~~the~~ least bit in a temper!)

“Those, alas! were the fugitive sort,

But you are my—*eadem semper!*”

Full stop,—and a Sermon. Yet think,—

There was surely good ground for a quarrel,—

She had checked me when just on the brink

Of—I feel—a remarkable MORAL.

VERS DE SOCIÉTÉ

THE SCREEN IN THE LUMBER ROOM

YES, here it is, behind the box,
That puzzle wrought so neatly—
That paradise of paradox—
We once knew so completely ;
You see it ? 'Tis the same, I swear,
Which stood, that chill September,
Beside your Aunt Lavinia's chair
* The year when . . You remember ?

Look, Laura, look ! You must recall
This florid " Fairy's Bower,"
This wonderful Swiss waterfall,
And this old " Leaning Tower " ;
And here's the " Maiden of Cashmere,"
And here is Bewick's " Starling,"
And here the dandy cuirassier
You thought was " such a Darling ! "

Your poor dear Aunt ! you know her way,
She used to say this figure
Reminded her of Count D'Orsay
" In all his youthful vigour " ;

THE SCREEN IN THE LUMBER ROOM

And here's the "cot beside the hill"
We chose for habitation,
The day that . . . But I doubt if still
You'd like the situation !

Too damp—by far ! She little knew,
Your guileless Aunt Lavinia,
Those evenings when she slumbered through
"The Prince of Abyssinia,"
That there were two beside her chair
Who both had quite decided
To see things in a rosier air
Than Rasselas provided !

Ah ! men wore stocks in Britain's land, •
And maids short waists and tippets,
When this old-fashioned screen was planned
From hoarded scraps and snippets ;
But more—far more, I think—to me
Than those who first designed it,
Is this—in Eighteen Seventy-Three
I kissed you first behind it.

VERS DE SOCIÉTÉ

DAISY'S VALENTINES

ALL night through Daisy's sleep, it seems,
Have ceaseless "rat-tats" thundered ;
All night through Daisy's rosy dreams
Have devious Postmen blundered,
Delivering letters round her bed,—
Mysterious missives, sealed with red,
And franked of course with due Queen's-head,—
While Daisy lay and wondered.

BÛt now, when chirping birds begin,
And Day puts off the Quaker,—
When Cook renews her morning din,
And rates the cheerful baker,—
She dreams her dream no dream at all,
For, just as pigeons come at call,
Winged letters flutter down, and fall
Around her head, and wake her.

Yes, there they are ! With quirk and twist,
And fraudulent arts directed ;
(Save Grandpapa's dear stiff old " fist,"
Through all disguise detected ;)
But which is his,—her young Lothair's,—
Who wooed her on the school-room stairs
With three sweet cakes, and two ripe pears,
In one neat pile collected ?

DAISY'S VALENTINES

'Tis there, be sure. Though truth to speak
 (If truth may be permitted),
I doubt that young "gift-bearing Greek"
 Is scarce for fealty fitted;
For has he not (I grieve to say)
To two loves more, on this same day,
In just this same emblazoned way,
 His transient vows transmitted?

He *may* be true. Yet, Daisy dear,
 That even youth grows colder
You'll find is no new thing, I fear;
 And when you're somewhat older,
You'll read of one Dardanian boy
Who "wooed with gifts" a maiden coy,—
Then took the morning train to Troy,
 In spite of all he'd told her.

But wait. Your time will come. And then,
 Obliging Fates, please send her
The bravest thing you have in men,
 Sound-hearted, strong, and tender;—
The kind of man, dear Fates, you know,
That feels how shyly Daisies grow,
And what soft things they are, and so
 Will spare to spoil or mend her.

VERS DE SOCIÉTÉ

IN TOWN

“The blue fly sung in the pane.”—TENNYSON.

TOILING in Town now is “horrid,”
(There is that woman again!)—
June in the zenith is torrid,
Thought gets dry in the brain.

There is that woman again :
“Strawberries ! fourpence a pottle !”
Thought gets dry in the brain ;
Ink gets dry in the bottle.

“Strawberries ! fourpence a pottle !”
Oh for the green of a lane !—
Ink gets dry in the bottle ;
“Buzz ” goes a fly in the pane !

Oh for the green of a lane,
Where one might lie and be lazy !
“Buzz ” goes a fly in the pane ;
Bluebottles drive me crazy !

Where one might lie and be lazy,
Careless of Town and all in it !—
Bluebottles drive me crazy :
I shall go mad in a minute !

IN TOWN

Careless of Town and all in it,
With some^e one to soothe and to still you ;—
I shall go mad in a minute ;
Bluebottle, then I shall kill you !

With some one to soothe and to still you,
As only one's feminine kin do,—
Bluebottle, then I shall kill you :
There now ! I've broken the window !

As only one's feminine kin do,—
Some muslin-clad Mabel or May !—
There now ! I've broken the window !
Bluebottle's off and away !

Some muslin-clad Mabel or May,
To dash one with eau de Cologne ;—
Bluebottle's off and away ;
And why should I stay here alone !

To dash one with eau de Cologne,
All over one's eminent forehead ;—
And why should I stay here alone !
Toiling in Town now is "horrid."

VERS DE SOCIÉTÉ

A SONNET IN DIALOGUE

FRANK (*on the Lawn*).

COME to the Terrace, May,—the sun is low.

MAY (*in the House*).

Thanks, I prefer my Browning here instead.

FRANK.

There are two peaches by the strawberry bed.

MAY.

They will be riper if we let them grow.

FRANK.

Then the Park-aloe is in bloom, you know.

MAY.

Also, her Majesty Queen Anne is dead.

FRANK.

But surely, May, your pony must be fed.

A SONNET IN DIALOGUE

MAY.

And was, and is. I fed him hours ago.
'Tis useless, Frank, you see I shall not stir.

FRANK.

Still, I had something you would like to hear.

MAY.

No doubt some new frivolity of men.

FRANK.

Nay,—'tis a thing the gentler sex deplores
Chiefly, I think . . .

MAY (*coming to the window*).

What is this secret, then?

FRANK (*mysteriously*).

There are no eyes more beautiful than yours !

VERS DE SOCIÉTÉ

GROWING GRAY

"On a l'âge de son cœur."—A. D'HOUDETOT.

A LITTLE more toward the light ;—
Me miserable ! Here's one that's white,
And one that's turning ;
Adieu to song and "salad days" ;
My Muse, let's go at once to Jay's,
And order mourning.

We must reform our rhymes, my Dear,—
Renounce the gay for the severe,—
Be grave, not witty ;
We have no more the right to find
That Pyrrha's hair is neatly twined,—
That Chloe's pretty.

Young Love's for us a farce that's played ; .
Light canzonet and serenade
No more may tempt us ;
Gray hairs but ill accord with dreams ;
From aught but sour didactic themes
Our years exempt us.

Indeed ! you really fancy so ?
You think for one white streak we grow
At once satiric ?

GROWING GRAY

A fiddlestick! Each hair's a string
To which our ancient Muse shall sing
A younger lyric.

The heart's still sound. Shall "cakes and ale"
Grow rare to youth because *we* rail
At schoolboy dishes?
Perish the thought! 'Tis ours to chant
When neither Time nor Tide can grant
Belief with wishes.

V A R I A

THE MALTWORM'S MADRIGAL

I DRINK of the Ale of Southwark, I drink of
the Ale of Chepe ;
At noon I dream on the settle ; at night I cannot
sleep ;
For my love, my love it groweth ; I waste me all
the day ;
And when I see sweet Alison, I know not what
to say.

The sparrow when he spieth his Dear upon the
tree,
He beateth-to his little wing ; he chirketh lustily ;
But when I see sweet Alison, the words begin to
fail ;
I wot that I shall die of Love—an I die not of
Ale.

Her lips are like the muscadel ; her brows are
black as ink ;
Her eyes are bright as beryl stones that in the
tankard wink ;
But when she sees me coming, she shrilleth out—
“ Te-Hee !
Fye on thy ruddy nose, Cousin, what lackest thou
of me ? ”

V A R I A

"Fye on thy ruddy nose, Cousin ! Why be thine
eyes so small ?

Why go thy legs tap-lappetty like men that fear to
fall ?

Why is thy leathern doublet besmeared with stain
and spot ?

Go to. * Thou art no man (she saith)—thou art a
"Pottle-pot ! "

"No man," i'faith. "No man !" she saith.
And "Pottle-pot " thereto !

"Thou sleepest like our dog all day ; thou drink'st
as fishes do."

I would that I were Tibb the dog ; he wags at her
his tail ;

Or would that I were fish, perdy, and all the sea
were Ale !

So I drink of the Ale of Southwark, I drink of the
Ale of Chepe ;

All day I dream in the sunlight ; I dream and eke
I weep,

But little lore of loving can any flagon teach,
For when my tongue is looséd most, then most I
lose my speech.

AN APRIL PASTORAL

AN APRIL PASTORAL

He.

W^HITHER away, fair Neat-herdess ?

She. Shepherd, I go to tend my kine.

He. Stay thou, and watch this flock of mine.

She. With thee ? Nay, that were idleness.]

He. Thy kine will pasture none the less.

She. Not so : they wait me and my sign.

He. I'll pipe to thee beneath the pine.

She. Thy pipe will soothe not their distress.

He. Dost thou not hear beside the spring
How the gay birds are carolling ?

She. I hear them. But it may not be.

He. Farewell then, Sweetheart ! Farewell now.

She. Shepherd, farewell . . Where goest thou ?

He. I go . . to tend thy kine for thee !

: V A R I A

A NEW SONG OF THE SPRING
GÄRDENS

To the Burden of "Rogues All."

COME hither ye gallants, come hither ye maids,
To the trim gravelled walks, to the shady
arcades ;
Come hither, come hither, the nightingales call ;—
Sing *Tantarara*,—Vauxhall ! Vauxhall !

- Come hither, ye cits, from your Lothbury hives !
Come hither, ye husbands, and look to your
wives !
For the sparks are as thick as the leaves in the
Mall ;—
Sing *Tantarara*,—Vauxhall ! Vauxhall !

Here the 'prentice from Aldgate may ogle a
Toast !
Here his Worship must elbow the Knight of the
Post !
For the wicket is free to the great and the
small ;—
Sing *Tantarara*,—Vauxhall ! Vauxhall !

A NEW SONG OF THE SPRING GARDENS

Here Betty may flaunt in her mistress's sack !
Here Trip wear his master's brocade on his back !
Here a hussy may ride, and a rogue take the
wall ;
Sing *Tantarara*,—Vauxhall ! Vauxhall !

Here Beauty may grant, and here Valour may ask !
Here the plainest may pass for a Belle (in a
mask) !
Here a domino covers the short and the tall ;—
Sing *Tantarara*,—Vauxhall ! Vauxhall !

'Tis a type of the world, with its drums and its din ;
'Tis a type of the world, for when once you come in
You are loth to go out ; like the world 'tis a ball ;—
Sing *Tantarara*,—Vauxhall ! Vauxhall !

V A R I A

A LOVE-SONG

(XVIII. CENT.)

WHEN first in CELIA'S ear I poured
A yet unpractised pray'r,
My trembling tongue sincere ignored
The aids of "sweet" and "fair."
I only said, as in me lay,
I'd strive her "worth" to reach;
She frowned, and turned her eyes away,-
So much for truth in speech.

Then DELIA came. I changed my plan;
I praised her to her face;
I praised her features,—praised her fan,
Her lap-dog and her lace;
I swore that not till Time were dead
My passion should decay;
She, smiling, gave her hand, and said
"Twill last then—for a DAY.

OF HIS MISTRESS

OF HIS MISTRESS

(After Anthony Hamilton)

TO G. S.

SHE that I love is neither brown nor fair,
And, in a word her worth to say,
There is no maid that with her may
* Compare.

Yet of her charms the count is clear, I ween :
There are five hundred things we see,
And then five hundred too there be,
Not seen.

Her wit, her wisdom are direct from Heaven :
But the sweet Graces from their store
A thousand finer touches more
Have given.

Her cheek's warm dye what painter's brush could
note?
Beside her Flora would be wan
And white as whiteness of the swan
Her throat.

V A R I A

Her supple waist, her arm from Venus came,
Hebe her nose and lip confess,
And, looking in her eyes, you guess
Her name.

THE NAMELESS CHARM

THE NAMELESS CHARM

(Expanded from an Epigram of Piron)

STELLA, 'tis not your dainty head,
Your artless look, I own ;
'Tis not your dear coquettish tread,
Or this, or that, alone ;

Nor is it all your gifts combined ;
'Tis something in your face,—
The untranslated, undefined,
Uncertainty of grace,

*

That taught the Boy on Ida's hill
To whom the meed was due ;
*All three have equal charms—but still
This one I give it to !*

VARIA

TO PHIDYLE

(HOR. III. 23)

INCENSE, and flesh of swine, and this year's
grain,
At the new moon, with suppliant hands, bestow,
O rustic Phidyle ! So naught shall know
Thy crops of blight, thy vine of Afric bane,
And hale the nurslings of thy flock remain
Through the sick apple-tide. Fit victims grow
'Twixt holm and oak upon the Algid snow,
Or Alban grass, that with their necks must stain
The Pontiff's axe : to thee can scarce avail
Thy modest gods with much slain to assail,
Whom myrtle crowns and rosemary can please.
Lay on the altar a hand pure of fault ;
More than rich gifts the Powers it shall appease,
Though pious but with meal and crackling salt.

TO HIS BOOK

TO HIS BOOK

(HOR., EP. I. 20)

FOR mart and street you seem to pine
With restless glances, Book of mine !
Still craving on some stall to stand,
Fresh pumiced from the binder's hand.
You chafe at locks, and burn to quit
Your modest haunt and audience fit
For hearers less discriminate.
I reared you up for no such fate.
Still, if you *must* be published, go ;
But mind, you can't come back, you know !

"What have I done?" I hear you cry,
And writhe beneath some critic's eye ;
"What did I want?"—when, scarce polite,
They do but yawn, and roll you tight.
And yet methinks, if I may guess
(Putting aside your heartlessness
In leaving me and this your home),
You should find favour, too, at Rome.
That is, they'll like you while you're young,
When you are old, you'll pass among

V A R I A

The Great Unwashed,—then thumb'd and sped,
Be fretted of slow moths, unread,
Or to Ilerda you'll be sent,
Or Utica, for banishment !
And I, whose counsel you disdain,
At that your lot shall laugh amain,
Wryly, as he who, like a fool,
Thrust o'er the cliff his restive mule.
Nay ! there is worse behind. In age
They e'en may take your babbling page
In some remotest " slum " to teach
Mere boys their rudiments of speech !

But go. When on warm days you see
A chance of listeners, speak of me.
~~Tell~~ them I soared from low estate,
A freedman's son, to higher fate
(That is, make up to me in worth
What you must take in point of birth) ;
Then tell them that I won renown
In peace and war, and pleased the town ;
Paint me as early gray, and one
Little of stature, fond of sun,
Quick-tempered, too,—but nothing more.
Add (if they ask) I'm forty-four,
Or was, the year that over us
Both Lollius ruled and Lepidus.

FOR A COPY OF HERRICK

FOR A COPY OF HERRICK

MANY days have come and gone,
Many suns have set and shone,
HERRICK, since thou sang'st of Wake,
Morris-dance and Barley-break ;—
Many men have ceased from care,
Many maidens have been fair,
Since thou sang'st of JULIA'S eyes,
JULIA'S lawns and tiffanies ;—
Many things are past : but thou,
GOLDEN-MOUTH, art singing now,
Singing clearly as of old,
And thy numbers are of gold !

V A R I A

WITH A VOLUME OF VERSE

ABOUT the ending of the Ramadán,
When leanest grows the famished Mussulman,
A haggard ne'er-do-well, Mahmoud by name,
At the tenth hour to Caliph OMAR came.
"Lord of the Faithful (quoth he), at the last
The long moon waneth, and men cease to fast ;
Hard then, O hard ! the lot of him must be,
Who spares to eat . . . but not for piety !"
"Hast thou no calling, Friend ?"—the Caliph said.
"Sir, I make verses for my daily bread."
"Verse!"—answered OMAR. "'Tis a dish, indeed,
Whereof but scantily a man may feed.
Go. Learn the Tenter's or the Potter's Art,—
Verse is a drug not sold in any mart."

*I know not if that hungry Mahmoud died ;
But this I know—he must have versified,
For, with his race, from better still to worse,
The plague of writing follows like a curse ;
And men will scribble though they fail to dine,
Which is the Moral of more Books than mine.*

FOR THE AVERY "KNICKERBOCKER"

FOR THE AVERY "KNICKER- BOCKER"

(WITH ORIGINAL DRAWINGS BY G. H. BOUGHTON)

SHADE of Herrick, Muse of Locker,
Help me sing of Knickerbocker !

BOUGHTON, had you bid me chant
Hymns to Peter Stuyvesant !
Had you bid me sing of Wouter,
(He ! the Onion-head ! the Doubter !) '—
But to rhyme of this one,—Mocker !
Who shall rhyme to Knickerbocker ?

Nay, but where my hand must fail
There the more shall yours avail ;
You shall take your brush and paint
All that ring of figures quaint,—
All those Rip-van-Winkle jokers,—
All those solid-looking smokers,
Pulling at their pipes of amber
In the dark-beamed Council-Chamber.

Only art like yours can touch
Shapes so dignified . . and Dutch ;
Only art like yours can show
How the pine-logs gleam and glow,

V A R I A

Till the fire-light laughs and passes
'Twixt the tankards and the glasses,
Touching with responsive graces
All those grave Batavian faces,—
Making bland and beatific
All that session soporific.

Then I come and write beneath,
BOUGHTON, he deserves the wreath ;
He can give us form and hue—
This the Muse can never do !

TO A PASTORAL POET

TO A PASTORAL POET

(H. E. B.)

AMONG my best I put your Book,
O Poet of the breeze and brook !
(That breeze and brook which blows and falls
More soft to those in city walls)
Among my best : and keep it still
Till down the fair grass-girdled hill,
Where slopes my garden-slip, there goes
The wandering wind that wakes the rose,
And scares the cohort that explore
The broad-faced sun-flower o'er and o'er,
Or starts the restless bees that fret
The bindweed and the mignonette.

Then I shall take your Book, and dream
I lie beside some haunted stream ;
And watch the crisping waves that pass,
And watch the flicker in the grass ;
And wait—and wait—and wait to see
The Nymph . . . that never comes to me !

V A R I A

TO ONE WHO BIDS ME SING

"*The straw is too old to make pipes of.*"

—DON QUIXOTE.

YOU ask a "many-winter'd" Bard
Where hides his old vocation?
I'll give—the answer is not hard—
A classic explanation.

"Immortal" though he be, he still,
Tithonus-like, grows older,
While she, his Muse of Pindus Hill,
Still bares a youthful shoulder.

Could that too-sprightly Nymph but leave
Her ageless grace and beauty,
They might, betwixt them both, achieve
A hymn *de Senectute*;

But She—She can't grow gray; and so,
Her slave, whose hairs are falling,
Must e'en his Doric flute forego,
And seek some graver calling,—

Not ill-content to stand aside,
To yield to minstrels fitter
His singing-robcs, his singing-pride,
His fancies sweet—and bitter!

“SAT EST SCRIPSISSE”

“SAT EST SCRIPSISSE”

(TO E. G., WITH A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS)

WHEN You and I have wandered beyond
the reach of call,
And all our Works immortal lie scattered on the
Stall,
It may be some new Reader, in that remoter
age,
Will find the present Volume and listless turn the
page.

For him I speak these verses. And, Sir (I say
to him),
This Book you see before you,—this masterpiece
of Whim,
Of Wisdom, Learning, Fancy (if you will, please,
attend),—
Was written by its Author, who gave it to his
Friend.

For they had worked together,—been Comrades
of the Pen ;
They had their points at issue, they differed now
and then ;

VARIA

But both loved Song and Letters, and each had
close at heart
The hopes, the aspirations, the "dear delays" of
Art.

And much they talked of Measures, and more
they talked of Style,
Of Form and "lucid Order," of "labour of the
File ;"
And he who wrote the writing, as sheet by sheet
was penned
(This all was long ago, Sir !), would read it to his
Friend.

They knew not, nor cared greatly, if they were
spark or star ;
They knew to move is somewhat, although the
goal be far ;
And larger light or lesser, this thing at least is
clear,
They served the Muses truly,—their service was
sincere.

This tattered page you see, Sir, this page alone
remains
(Yes,—fourpence is the lowest !) of all those
pleasant pains ;
And as for him that read it, and as for him that
wrote,
No Golden Book enrolls them among its "Names
of Note."

“SAT EST SCRIPSISSE”

And yet they had their office. Though they to-
• day are passed,
They marched in that procession where is no first
or last ;
Though cold is now their hoping, though they no
more aspire,
They too had once their ardour—they handed on
the fire.

PROLOGUES AND EPILOGUES

PROLOGUE TO ABBEY'S EDITION OF
"SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER"

IN the year Seventeen Hundred and Seventy
and Three,
When the GEORGES were ruling o'er Britain the free,
There was played a new play, on a new-fashioned
plan,
By the GOLDSMITH who brought out the *Good-*
Natur'd Man.

New-fashioned, in truth—for this play, it appears,
Dealt largely in laughter, and nothing in tears,
While the type of those days, as the learned will
tell ye,
Was the CUMBERLAND whine or the whimper of
KELLY.
So the Critics pooh-poohed, and the Actresses
pouted,
And the Public were cold, and the Manager
doubted ;
But the Author had friends, and they all went to
see it.
Shall we join them in fancy? You answer, So be it!

Imagine yourself then, good Sir, in a wig,
Either grizzle or bob—never mind, you look big.
You've a sword at your side, in your shoes there
are buckles,
And the folds of fine linen flap over your knuckles.

PROLOGUES AND EPILOGUES

You have come with light heart, and with eyes
that are brighter,
From a pint of red Port, and a steak at the Mitre ;
You have strolled from the Bar and the purlieus
of Fleet,
And you turn from the Strand into Catherine
Street ;
Thence climb to the law-loving summits of Bow,
Till you stand at the Portal all play-goers know.
See, here are the 'prentice lads laughing and
pushing,
And here are the seamstresses shrinking and
blushing,
And here are the urchins who, just as to-day, Sir,
Buzz at you like flies with their " Bill o' the Play,
Sir ? "
Yet you take one, no less, and you squeeze by
the Chairs,
With their freights of fine ladies, and mount up
the stairs ;
So issue at last on the House in its pride,
And pack yourself snug in a box at the side.

Here awhile let us pause to take breath as we sit,
Surveying the humours and pranks of the Pit,—
With its Babel of chatterers buzzing and humming,
With its impudent orange-girls going and coming,
With its endless surprises of face and of feature,
All grinning as one in a gust of good-nature.
Then we turn to the Boxes where TRIP in his lace
Is aping his master, and keeping his place.
Do but note how the Puppy flings back with a yawn,
Like a Duke at the least, or a Bishop in lawn !

“SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER”

Then sniffs at his bouquet, whips round with a
smirk,
And ogles the ladies at large—like a Turk.
But the music comes in, and the blanks are all
filling,
And TRIP must trip up to the seats at a shilling;
And spite of the mourning that most of us wear
The House takes a gay and a holiday air;
For the fair sex are clever at turning the tables,
And seem to catch coquetry even in sables.
Moreover, your mourning has ribbons and stars,
And is sprinkled about with the red coats of
Mars.

Look, look, there is WILKES! You may tell by
the squint;
But he grows every day more and more like the
print
(Ah! HOGARTH *could* draw!); and behind at the
back
HUGH KELLY, who looks all the blacker in black.
That is CUMBERLAND next, and the prim-looking
person
In the corner, I take it, is *Ossian* MACPHERSON.
And rolling and blinking, here, too, with the rest,
Comes sturdy old JOHNSON, dressed out in his
best;
How he shakes his old noddle! I'll wager a
crown,
Whatever the law is, *he's* laying it down!
Beside him is REYNOLDS, who's deaf; and the
hale
Fresh, farmer-like fellow, I fancy, is THRALE.

PROLOGUES AND EPILOGUES

There is BURKE with GEORGE STEEVENS. And
somewhere, no doubt,
Is the AUTHOR—too nervous just now to come
out;
He's a queer little fellow, grave-featured, pock-
pitted,
Tho' they say, in his cups, he's as gay as a
kitten.

But where is our play-bill? *Mistakes of a
Night!*

If the title's prophetic, I pity his plight!
She Stoops. Let us hope she won't fall at full
length,
For the piece—so 'tis whispered—is wanting in
strength.
And the humour is “low!”—you are doubtless
aware

There's a character, even, that “dances a bear!”
Then the cast is so poor,—neither marrow nor
pith!

Why can't they get WOODWARD or Gentleman
SMITH!

“LEE LEWES!” Who's LEWES? The fellow
has played

Nothing better, they tell me, than harlequinade!

“DUBELLAMY”—“QUICK,”—these are nobodies.
Stay, I

Believe I saw QUICK once in *Beau Mordecai*.

Yes, QUICK is not bad. Mrs. GREEN, too, is
funny;

But SHUTER, ah! SHUTER's the man for my
money!

“SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER”

He's the quaintest, the oddest of mortals, is
SHUTER,
And he has but one fault—he's too fond of the
pewter.
Then there's little BULKELY . . .

But here in the middle,
From the orchestra comes the first squeak of a
fiddle.
Then the bass gives a growl, and the horn makes
a dash,
And the music begins with a flourish and crash,
And away to the zenith goes swelling and swaying,
While we tap on the box to keep time to the
playing.
And we hear the old tunes as they follow and
mingle,
Till at last from the stage comes a ting-a-ting
tingle;
And the fans cease to whirr, and the House for a
minute
Grows still as if naught but wax figures were in it.
Then an actor steps out, and the eyes of all
glisten.
Who is it? *The Prologue*. He's sobbing. Hush!
listen.

[*Thereupon enters Mr. Woodward in black, with a handkerchief to his eyes, to speak Garrick's Prologue, after which comes the play. In the volume for which the foregoing additional Prologue was written the following Envoi was added.*]

PROLOGUES AND EPILOGUES

L'ENVOI

GOOD-BYE to you, KELLY, your fetters are
broken!
Good-bye to you, CUMBERLAND, GOLDSMITH has
spoken!
Good-bye to sham Sentiment, moping and mum-
ming,
For GOLDSMITH has spoken and SHERIDAN'S*
coming;
And the frank Muse of Comedy laughs in free
air
As she laughed with the Great Ones, with
SHAKESPEARE, MOLIERE!

PROLOGUE TO ABBEY'S "QUIET LIFE"

PROLOGUE TO ABBHEY'S "QUIET LIFE"

EVEN as one in city pent,
Dazed with the stir and din of town,
Drums on the pane in discontent,
And sees the dreary rain come down,
Yet, through the dimmed and dripping
glass,
Beholds, in fancy, visions pass
Of Spring that breaks with all her leaves,
Of birds that build in thatch and eaves,
Of woodlands where the throstle calls,
Of girls that gather cowslip balls,
Of kine that low, and lambs that cry,
Of wains that jolt and rumble by,
Of brooks that sing by brambly ways,
Of sunburned folk that stand at gaze,
Of all the dreams with which men cheat
The stony sermons of the street,
So, in its hour, the artist brain
Weary of human ills and woes,
Weary of passion and of pain,
And vaguely craving for repose,
Deserts awhile the stage of strife
To draw the even, ordered life,

PROLOGUES AND EPILOGUES

The easeful days, the dreamless nights,
The homely round of plain delights,
The calm, the unambitioned mind,
Which all men seek, and few men find.

EPILOGUE.

LET the dream pass, the fancy fade !
We clutch a shape, and hold a shade.
Is Peace *so* peaceful? Nay,—who knows !
There are volcanoes under snows.

“STORY OF ROSINA”

DEDICATION OF “THE STORY OF ROSINA”

(TO AN IDEAL READER)

WHAT would our modern maids to-day?
I watch, and can't conjecture:
A dubious tale?—an Ibsen play?—
A pessimistic lecture?

I know not. But this, Child, I know
You like things sweet and seemly,
Old-fashioned flowers, old shapes in Bow,
“Auld Robin Gray” (extremely);

You—with my “Dorothy”¹—delight
In fragrant cedar-presses;
In window corners warm and bright,
In lawn, and lilac dresses;

You still can read, at any rate,
Charles Lamb and “Evelina;”
To you, My Dear, I dedicate
This “STORY OF ROSINA.”

¹ See *ante*, p. 104.

PROLOGUES AND EPILOGUES

PROLOGUE TO "EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY VIGNETTES"

(THIRD SERIES)

"*Versate . . .*
Quid valeant humeri."—HOR. *Ars Poetica*.

HOW shall a Writer change his ways?
Read his Reviewers' blame, not praise.
In blame, as Boileau said of old,
The truth is shadowed, if not told.

* * * * *

There! Let that row of stars extend
To hide the faults I mean to mend.
Why should the Public need to know
The standard that I fall below?
Or learn to search for that defect
My Critic bids me to correct?
No: in this case the Worldly-Wise
Keep their own counsel—and revise.

Yet something of my Point of View
I may confide, my Friend, to You.
I don't pretend to paint the vast
And complex picture of the Past:
Nor mine the wars of humankind,
"The furious troops in battle joined;"

“EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY VIGNETTES”

Not mine the march, the counter-march,
The trumpets, the triumphal arch.
For detail, detail, most I care
(*Ce superflu, si nécessaire !*) ;
I cultivate a private bent
For episode, for incident ;
I take a page of Some One's life,
His quarrel with his friend, his wife,
His good or evil hap at Court,
“ His habit as he lived,” his sport,
The books he read, the trees he planted,
The dinners that he ate—or wanted :
As much, in short, as one may hope
To cover with a microscope.

I don't taboo a touch of scandal,
If Gray or Walpole hold the candle
Nor do I use a lofty tone
Where faults are weaknesses alone.

In studies of Life's seamy side
I own I feel no special pride ;
The Fleet, the round-house, and the gibbets
Are not among my prize exhibits ;
Nor could I, if I would, outdo
What Fielding wrote, or Hogarth drew.

Yet much I love to arabesque
What Gautier christened a “ Grotesque ; ”
To take his oddities and “ lunes,”
And drape them neatly with festoons,
Until, at length, I chance to get
The thing I designate “ Vignette.”

PROLOGUES AND EPILOGUES

To sum the matter then :—My aim
Is modest. This is all I claim :
To paint a part and not the whole,
The trappings rather than the soul.

The Evolution of the Time,
The silent Forces fighting Crime,
The Fetishes that fail, and pass,
The struggle between Class and Class,
The Wealth still adding land to lands,
The Crown that falls, the Faith that stands .
All this I leave to abler hands.

“EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY VIGNETTES”

EPILOGUE TO “EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY VIGNETTES”

(SECOND SERIES)

“WHAT is it then,”—some Reader asks,—
“What is it that attaches
Your fancy so to fans and masks,—
To periwigs and patches?”

“Is Human Life to-day so poor,—
So bloodless,—you disdain it,
To ‘galvanize’ the Past once more?”
—Permit me. I’ll explain it.

This Age I grant (and grant with pride),
Is varied, rich, eventful;
But, if you touch its weaker side
Deplorably resentful:

Belaud it, and it takes your praise
With air of calm conviction;
Condemn it, and at once you raise
A storm of contradiction

PROLOGUES AND EPILOGUES

Whereas with these old Shades of mine,
 Their ways and dress delight me ;
And should I trip by word or line,
 They cannot well indict me.

Not that I think to err. I seek
 To steer 'twixt blame and blindness ;
I strive (as some one said in Greek)
 To speak the truth with kindness :

But—should I fear to render clear
 Their title, rank, or station—
I still may sleep secure, nor fear
 A suit for defamation.

ESSAYS IN OLD FRENCH FORMS

“They are a school to win
The fair French daughter to learn English in;
And, gracèd with her song,
To make the language sweet upon her tongue.”

BEN JONSON, *Underwoods*.

*As, to the pipe, with rhythmic feet
In windings of some old-world dance,
The smiling couples cross and meet,
Join hands, and then in line advance,
So, to these fair old tunes of France,
Through all their maze of to and fro,
The light-heeled numbers laughing go,
Retreat, return, and ere they flee,
One moment pause in panting row,
And seem to say—Vos plaudite !*

ROSE-LEAVES

ROSE - LEAVES

“ *Sans peser.—Sans rester.* ”

A KISS.

ROSE kissed me to-day.
Will she kiss me to-morrow ?
Let it be as it may,
Rose kissed me to-day
But the pleasure gives way
To a savour of sorrow ;—
Rose kissed me to-day,—
Will she kiss me to-morrow ?

CIRCE.

IN the School of Coquettés
Madam Rose is a scholar :—
O, they fish with all nets
In the School of Coquettes !
When her brooch she forgets
'Tis to show her new collar ;
In the School of Coquettes
Madam Rose is a scholar !

A TEAR.

THERE'S a tear in her eye,—
Such a clear little jewel !
What *can* make her cry ?
There's a tear in her eye.

ESSAYS IN OLD FRENCH FORMS

"Puck has killed a big fly,—
And it's *horribly* cruel ;"
There's a tear in her eye,—
Such a clear little jewel !

A GREEK GIFT.

HERE'S a present for Rose,
How pleased she is looking !
Is it verse ?—is it prose ?
Here's a present for Rose !
"*Plats,*" "*Entrées,*" and "*Rôts,*"—
Why, it's "Gouffé on Cooking" !
Here's a present for Rose,
How *pleased* she is looking !

"URCEUS EXIT."

I INTENDED an Ode,
And it turned to a Sonnet.
It began *à la mode*,
I intended an Ode ;
But Rose crossed the road
In her latest new bonnet ;
I intended an Ode ;
And it turned to a Sonnet.

“PERSICOS ODI”

“PERSICOS ODI”

DAVUS, I detest
Orient display ;
Wreaths on linden drest,
Davus, I detest.
Let the late rose rest
Where it fades away :—
Davus, I detest
Orient display.

Naught but myrtle twine
Therefore, Boy, for me
Sitting 'neath the vine,—
Naught but myrtle twine ;
Fitting to the wine,
Not unfitting thee ;
Naught but myrtle twine
Therefore, Boy, for me.

ESSAYS IN OLD FRENCH FORMS

THE WANDERER

LOVE comes back to his vacant dwelling,—
The old, old Love that we knew of yore !
We see him stand by the open door,
With his great eyes sad, and his bosom swelling.

He makes as though in our arms repelling,
He fain would lie as he lay before ;—
Love comes back to his vacant dwelling,—
The old, old Love that we knew of yore !

Ah, who shall help us from over-spelling
That sweet forgotten, forbidden lore !
E'en as we doubt in our heart once more,
With a rush of tears to our eyelids welling,
Love comes back to his vacant dwelling.

“VITAS HINNULEO”

“VITAS HINNULEO”

YOU shun me, Chloe, wild and shy
As some stray fawn that seeks its mother
Through trackless woods. If spring-winds sigh,
It vainly strives its fears to smother ;—

Its trembling knees assail each other
When lizards stir the bramble dry ;—
You shun me, Chloe, wild and shy
As some stray fawn that seeks its mother.

And yet no Libyan lion I,—
No ravening thing to rend another ;
Lay by your tears, your tremors by—
A Husband's better than a brother ;
Nor shun me, Chloe, wild and shy
As some stray fawn that seeks its mother.

ESSAYS IN OLD FRENCH FORMS

“ON LONDON STONES”

ON London stones I sometimes sigh
For wider green and bluer sky ;—
Too oft the trembling note is drowned
In this huge city's varied sound ;—
“ Pure song is country-born ”—I cry.

Then comes the spring,—the months go by,
The last stray swallows seaward fly ;
And I—I too !—no more am found
On London stones !

In vain !—the woods, the fields deny
That clearer strain I fain would try ;
Mine is an urban Muse, and bound
By some strange law to paven ground ;
Abroad she pouts ;—she is not shy
On London stones !

“FAREWELL, RENOWN!”

“FAREWELL, RENOWN!”

FAREWELL, Renown! Too fleeting flower,
That grows a year to last an hour;—
Prize of the race's dust and heat,
Too often trodden under feet,—
Why should I court your “barren dower”?

Nay;—had I Dryden's angry power,—
The thews of Ben,—the wind of Gower,—
Not less my voice should still repeat
“Farewell, Renown!”

Farewell!—Because the Muses' bower
Is filled with rival brows that lower;—
Because, how'er his pipe be sweet,
The Bard, that “pays,” must please the street;—
But most . . . because the grapes are sour,—
Farewell, Renown!

ESSAYS IN OLD FRENCH FORMS

"MORE POETS YET!"

(TO J. L. W.)

"**M**ORE Poets yet!"—I hear him say,
 Arming his heavy hand to slay;—
 "Despite my skill and 'swashing blow,'
 They seem to sprout where'er I go;—
 I killed a host but yesterday!"

Slash on, O Hercules! You may.
Your task's, at best, a Hydra-fray;
 And though *you* cut, not less will grow
 More Poets yet!

Too arrogant! For who shall stay
The first blind motions of the May?
 Who shall out-blot the morning glow?—
 Or stem the full heart's overflow?
Who? There will rise, till Time decay,
 More Poets yet!

“WITH PIPE AND FLUTE”

“WITH PIPE AND FLUTE”

(TO E. G.)

WITH pipe and flute the rustic Pan
Of old made music sweet for man ;
And wonder hushed the warbling bird,
And closer drew the calm-eyed herd,—
The rolling river slower ran.

Ah ! would,—ah ! would, a little span,
Some air of Arcady could fan
This age of ours, too seldom stirred
With pipe and flute !

But now for gold we plot and plan ;
And from Beersheba unto Dan,
Apollo's self might pass unheard,
Or find the night-jar's note preferred ;—
Not so it fared, when time began,
With pipe and flute !

ESSAYS IN OLD FRENCH FORMS

TO A JUNE ROSE

(TO A. P.)

O ROYAL Rose! the Roman dress'd
His feast with thee; thy petals press'd
Augustan brows; thine odour fine,
• Mix'd with the three-times-mingled wine,
Lent the long Thracian draught its zest.

What marvel then, if host and guest,
By Song, by Joy, by Thee caress'd,
Half-trembled on the half-divine,
O royal Rose!

And yet—and yet—I love thee best
In our old gardens of the West,
Whether about my thatch thou twine,
Or Hers, that brown-eyed maid of mine,
Who lulls thee on her lawny breast,
O royal Rose!

TO DAFFODILS

TO DAFFODILS

(TO A. J. M.)

O YELLOW flowers that HERRICK sung!
O yellow flowers that danced and swung
In WORDSWORTH'S verse, and now to me,
Unworthy, from this "pleasant lea,"
Laugh back, unchanged and ever young;—

Ah, what a text to us o'erstrung,
O'erwrought, o'erreaching, hoarse of lung,
You teach by that immortal glee,
O yellow flowers!

We, by the Age's æstrus stung,
Still hunt the New with eager tongue,
Vexed ever with the Old, but ye,
What ye have been ye still shall be,
When we are dust the dust among,
O yellow flowers!

ESSAYS IN OLD FRENCH FORMS

ON THE HURRY OF THIS TIME

(TO F. G.)

WITH slower pen men used to write,
Of old, when "letters" were "polite ;"
In ANNA'S, or in GEORGE'S days,
They could afford to turn a phrase,
Or trim a straggling theme aright.

They knew not steam ; electric light
Not yet had dazed their calmer sight ;—
They meted out both blame and praise
With slower pen.

Too swiftly now the Hours take flight !
What's read at morn is dead at night :
Scant space have we for Art's delays,
Whose breathless thought so briefly stays,
We may not work—ah ! would we might !—
With slower pen.

“WHEN BURBADGE PLAYED”

“WHEN BURBADGE PLAYED”

(TO L. B.)

WHEN Burbadge played, the stage was bare
Of fount and temple, tower and stair ;
Two backwords eked a battle out ;
Two supers made a rabble rout ;
The Throne of Denmark was a chair !

And yet, no less, the audience there
Thrilled through all changes of Despair,
Hope, Anger, Fear, Delight, and Doubt
When Burbadge played !

This is the Actor's gift ; to share
All moods, all passions, nor to care
One whit for scene, so he without
Can lead men's minds the roundabout,
Stirred as of old those hearers were
When Burbadge played !

ESSAYS IN OLD FRENCH FORMS

A GREETING

• (TO W. C.)

BUT once or twice we met, touched hands.
To-day between us both expands
A waste of tumbling waters wide,—
A waste by me as yet untried,
Vague with the doubt of unknown lands.

Time like a despot speeds his sands :
A year he blots, a day he brands ;
We walked, we talked by Thamís' side
But once or twice.

What makes a friend? What filmy strands
Are these that turn to iron bands?
What knot is this so firmly tied
That naught but Fate can now divide?—
Ah, these are things one understands
But once or twice!

LÉAL SOUVENIR

LÉAL SOUVENIR

(E. F. B.)

“FOR old sake’s sake!” ’Twere hard to choose
Words fitter for an old-world Muse
Than these, that in their cadence bring
Faint fragrance of the posy-ring,
And charms that rustic lovers use.

The long day lengthens, and we lose
The first pale flush, the morning hues,—
Ah! but the back-look, lingering,
For old sake’s sake!

That we retain. Though Time refuse
To lift the veil on forward views,
Despot in most, he is not king
Of those kind memories that cling
Around his travelled avenues
For old sake’s sake!

ESSAYS IN OLD FRENCH FORMS

AFTER WATTEAU

(TO F. W.)

"EMBARQUONS-NOUS!" I seem to go
Against my will. 'Neath alleys low
I bend, and hear across the air—
Across the stream—faint music rare,—
Whose "*cornemuse*," whose "*chaluveau*"?

Hark! was not that a laugh I know?
Who was it, hurrying, turned to show
The galley swinging by the stair?—
"Embarquons-nous!"

The silk sail flaps, light breezes blow;
Frail laces flutter, satins flow;
You, with the love-knot in your hair,
"Allons, embarquons pour Cythère";
You will not? Press her, then, PIERROT,—
"Embarquons-nous!"

TO ETHEL

TO ETHEL

(Who wishes she had lived—

*“ In teacup-times of hood and hoop,
Or while the patch was worn.”*)

“ **I** N teacup-times ! ” The style of dress
Would suit your beauty, I confess ;
BELINDA-like, the patch you'd wear ;
I picture you with powdered hair,—
You'd make a charming Shepherdess !

And I—no doubt—could well express
SIR PLUME'S complete conceitedness,—
Could poise a clouded cane with care
“ In teacup-times ! ”

The parts would fit precisely—yes :
We should achieve a huge success !
You should disdain, and I despair,
With quite the true Augustan air ;
But . . could I love you more, or less,—
“ In teacup-times ” ?

ESSAYS IN OLD FRENCH FORMS

“WHEN *FINIS* COMES”

WHEN *Finis* comes, the Book we close,
And somewhat sadly, Fancy goes,
With backward step, from stage to stage
Of that accomplished pilgrimage . . .
The thorn lies thicker than the rose !

There is so much that no one knows,—
So much un-reached that none suppose ;
What flaws ! what faults !—on every page,
When *Finis* comes.

Still,—they must pass ! The swift Tide flows.
Though not for all the laurel grows,
Perchance, in this be-slandered age,
The worker, mainly, wins his wage ;—
And Time will sweep both friends and foes
When *FINIS* comes !

“O FONS BANDUSIÆ”

“O FONS BANDUSIÆ”

O BABBLING Spring, than glass more clear,
Worthy of wreath and cup sincere,
To-morrow shall a kid be thine
With swelled and sprouting brows for sign,—
Sure sign!—of loves and battles near.

Child of the race that butt and rear!
Not less, alas! his life-blood dear
Must tinge thy cold wave crystalline,
O babbling Spring!

Thee Sirius knows not. Thou dost cheer
With pleasant cool the plough-worn steer,—
The wandering flock. This verse of mine
Will rank thee one with founts divine;
Men shall thy rock and tree revere,
O babbling Spring!

ESSAYS IN OLD FRENCH FORMS

“EXTREMUM TANAIN”

, (TO J. K.)

BEFORE thy doors too long of late,
O Lyce, I bewail my fate ;
Not Don's barbarian maids, I trow,
Would treat their luckless lovers so ;
Thou,—thou alone art obstinate.

Hast thou nor eyes nor ears, Ingrate !
Hark ! how the NORTH WIND shakes thy gate !
Look ! how the laurels bend with snow
Before thy doors !

Lay by thy pride,—nor hesitate,
Lest Love and I grow desperate ;
If prayers, if gifts for naught must go,
If naught my frozen pallor show,—
Beware ! . . . I shall not always wait
Before thy doors !

“VIXI PUELLIS”

“VIXI PUELLIS”

WE loved of yore, in warfare bold,
Nor laureless. Now all must go ;
Let this left wall of Venus show
The arms, the tuneless lyre of old.

Here let them hang, the torches cold,
The portal-bursting bar, the bow,
We loved of yore.

But thou, who Cyprus sweet dost hold,
And Memphis free from Thracian snow,
Goddess and queen, with vengeful blow,
Smite,—smite but once that pretty scold
We loved of yore !

ESSAYS IN OLD FRENCH FORMS

“WHEN I SAW YOU LAST, ROSE”

WHEN I saw you last, Rose,
You were only so high ;—
How fast the time goes !

Like a bud ere it blows,
You just peeped at the sky,
When I saw you last, Rose !

Now your petals uncloze,
Now your May-time is nigh ;—
How fast the time goes !

And a life,—how it grows !
You were scarcely so shy,
When I saw you last, Rose !

In your bosom it shows
There's a guest on the sly ;
(How fast the time goes !)

Is it Cupid ? Who knows !
Yet you used not to sigh,
When I saw you last, Rose ;—
How fast the time goes !

ON A NANKIN PLATE

ON A NANKIN PLATE

“**A**H me, but it might have been !
Was there ever so dismal a fate ? ”—
Quoth the little blue mandarin.

“ Such a maid as was never seen !
She passed, tho’ I cried to her ‘ Wait,’—
Ah me, but it might have been !

“ I cried, ‘ O my Flower, my Queen,•
Be mine ! ’ ’Twas precipitate,”—
Quoth the little blue mandarin,—

“ But then . . she was just sixteen,—
Long-eyed,—as a lily straight,—
Ah me, but it might have been !

“ As it was, from her palankeen,
She laughed—‘ You’re a week too late ! ’ ”
(Quoth the little blue mandarin.)

“ That is why, in a mist of spleen,
I mourn on this Nankin Plate.
Ah me, but it might have been ! ”—
Quoth the little blue mandarin.

ESSAYS IN OLD FRENCH FORMS

FOR A COPY OF THEOCRITUS

O SINGER of the field and fold,
THEOCRITUS! Pan's pipe was thine,—
Thine was the happier Age of Gold.

For thee the scent of new-turned mould,
The bee-hives, and the murmuring pine,
O Singer of the field and fold!

Thou sang'st the simple feasts of old,—
The beechen bowl made glad with wine . .
Thine was the happier Age of Gold.

Thou bad'st the rustic loves be told,—
Thou bad'st the tuneful reeds combine,
O Singer of the field and fold!

And round thee, ever-laughing, rolled
The blithe and blue Sicilian brine . .
Thine was the happier Age of Gold.

Alas for us! Our songs are cold;
Our Northern suns too sadly shine:—
O Singer of the field and fold,
Thine was the happier Age of Gold!

TU NE QUAESIERIS

“TU NE QUAESIERIS”

SEEK not, O Maid, to know
(Alas ! unblest the trying !)
When thou and I must go.

No lore of stars can show.
What shall be, vainly prying,
Seek not, O maid, to know.

Will Jove long years bestow ?—
Or is 't with this one dying,
That thou and I must go,

Now,—when the great winds blow,
And waves the reef are plying ? . .
Seek not, O Maid, to know.

Rather let clear wine flow,
On no vain hope relying ;
When thou and I must go

Lies dark ;—then be it so.
Now,—*now*, churl Time is flying ;
Seek not, O Maid, to know
When thou and I must go.

ESSAYS IN OLD FRENCH FORMS

THE PRODIGALS

“PRINCES!—and you, most valorous,
Nobles and Barons of all degrees!
Hearken awhile to the prayer of us,—
Beggars that come from the over-seas!
Nothing we ask or of gold or fees;
Harry us not with the hounds we pray;
Lo,—for the surcote’s hem we seize,—
Give us—ah! give us—but Yesterday!”

“Dames—most delicate, amorous!
Damosels blithe as the belted bees!
Hearken awhile to the prayer of us,—
Beggars that come from the over-seas!
Nothing we ask of the things that please;
Weary are we, and worn, and gray;
Lo,—for we clutch and we clasp your knees,—
Give us—ah! give us—but Yesterday!”

“Damosels—Dames, be piteous!”
(But the dames rode fast by the roadway trees.)
“Hear us, O Knights magnanimous!”
(But the knights pricked on in their panoplies.)
Nothing they gat or of hope or ease,
But only to beat on the breast and say:—
“Life we drank to the dregs and lees;
Give us—ah! give us—but Yesterday!”

THE PRODIGALS

ENVOY.

YOUTH, take heed to the prayer of these !
Many there be by the dusty way,—

Many that cry to the rocks and seas
“ Give us—ah ! give us—but Yesterday ! ”

ESSAYS IN OLD FRENCH FORMS

ON A FAN THAT BELONGED TO THE MARQUISE DE POMPADOUR

C HICKEN-SKIN, delicate, white,
Painted by Carlo Vanloo,
Loves in a riot of light,
Roses and vaporous blue ;
Hark to the dainty *frou-frou* !
Picture above, if you can,
Eyes that could melt as the dew,—
This was the Pompadour's fan !

See how they rise at the sight,
Thronging the *Œil de Bœuf* through,
Courtiers as butterflies bright,
Beauties that Fragonard drew,
Talon-rouge, *falbala*, queue,
Cardinal, Duke,—to a man,
Eager to sigh or to sue,—
This was the Pompadour's fan !

Ah, but things more than polite
Hung on this toy, *voyez-vous* !
Matters of state and of might,
Things that great ministers do ;
Things that, maybe, overthrew

ON A FAN

Those in whose brains they began ;
Here, was the sign and the cue,—
This was the Pompadour's fan !

ENVOY.

WHERE are the secrets it knew ?
Weavings of plot and of plan ?
—But where is the Pompadour, too ?
This was the Pompadour's Fan !

ESSAYS IN OLD FRENCH FORMS

A BALLAD TO QUEEN ELIZABETH

of the Spanish Armada

KING PHILIP had vaunted his claims ;
He had sworn for a year he would sack us ;
With an army of heathenish names
He was coming to fagot and stack us ;
Like the thieves of the sea he would track us,
And shatter our ships on the main ;
But we had bold Neptune to back us,—
And where are the galleons of Spain ?

His carackes were christened of dames
To the kirtles whereof he would tack us ;
With his saints and his gilded stern-frames,
He had thought like an egg-shell to crack us ;
Now Howard may get to his Flaccus,
And Drake to his Devon again,
And Hawkins bowl rubbers to Bacchus,—
For where are the galleons of Spain ?

Let his Majesty hang to St. James
The axe that he whetted to hack us ;
He must play at some lustier games
Or at sea he can hope to out-thwack us ;
To his mines of Peru he would pack us

A BALLAD TO QUEEN ELIZABETH

To tug at his bullet and chain ;
Alas ! that his Greatness should lack us !—
But where are the galleons of Spain ?

ENVOY.

GLORIANA ! the Don may attack us
Whenever his stomach be fain ;
He must reach us before he can rack us, . . .
And where are the galleons of Spain ?

ESSAYS IN OLD FRENCH FORMS

A BALLAD OF HEROES

"Now all your victories are in vain."

—MARY F. ROBINSON.

BECAUSE you passed, and now are not,-
Because, in some remoter day,
Your sacred dust from doubtful spot
Was blown of ancient airs away,—
Because you perished,—must men say
Your deeds were naught, and so profane
Your lives with that cold burden? Nay,
The deeds you wrought are not in vain!

Though, it may be, above the plot
That hid your once imperial clay,
No greener than o'er men forgot
The unregarding grasses sway;—
Though there no sweeter is the lay
From careless bird,—though you remain
Without distinction of decay,—
The deeds you wrought are not in vain!

No. For while yet in tower or cot
Your story stirs the pulses' play;
And men forget the sordid lot—
The sordid care, of cities gray;—
While yet, beset in homelier fray,

A BALLAD OF HEROES

They learn from you the lesson plain
• That Life may go, so Honour stay,—
• The deeds you wrought are not in vain !

ENVOY.

HEROES of old ! I humbly lay
The laurel on your graves again ;
Whatever men have done, men may,—
The deeds you wrought are not in vain.

ESSAYS IN OLD FRENCH FORMS

THE BALLAD OF THE THRUSH

A^CROSS the noisy street
I hear him careless throw
One warning utterance sweet ;
Then faint at first, and low,
The full notes closer grow ;
Hark ! what a torrent gush !
They pour, they overflow—
Sing on, sing on, O Thrush !

What trick, what dream's deceit
Has fooled his fancy so
To scorn of dust and heat ?
I, prisoned here below,
Feel the fresh breezes blow ;
And see, thro' flag and rush,
Cool water sliding slow—
Sing on, sing on, O Thrush !

Sing on. What though thou beat
On that dull bar, thy foe !
Somewhere the green boughs meet
Beyond the roofs a-row ;
Somewhere the blue skies show,
Somewhere no black walls crush
Poor hearts with hopeless woe—
Sing on, sing on, O Thrush !

THE BALLAD OF THE THRUSH

ENVOY.

BIRD, though they come, we know,
The empty cage, the hush ;
Still, ere the brief day go,
Sing on, sing on, O Thrush !

ESSAYS IN OLD FRENCH FORMS

THE BALLAD OF THE BARMECIDE

TO one in Eastern clime,—’tis said,—
There came a man at eve with “Lo!
Friend, ere the day be dimmed and dead,
Hast thou a mind to feast, and know
Fair cates, and sweet wine’s overflow?”
To whom that other fain replied—
“Lead on. Not backward I nor slow;—
Where is thy feast, O Barmecide?”

Thereon the bidder passed and led
To where, apart from dust and glōw,
They found a board with napery spread,
And gold, and glistening cups a-row.
“Eat,” quoth the host, yet naught did show.
To whom his guest—“Thy board is wide;
But barren is the cheer, I trow;
Where is thy feast, O Barmecide?”

“Eat,” quoth the man not less, and fed
From meats unseen, and made as though
He drank of wine both white and red.
“Eat,—ere the day to darkness grow.
Short space and scant the Fates bestow!”
What time his guest him wondering eyed,
Muttering in wrath his beard below—
“Where is thy feast, O Barmecide?”

THE BALLAD OF THE BARMECIDE

ENVOY.

LIFE,—'tis of thee they fable so.

Thou bidd'st us eat, and still denied,
Still fasting, from thy board we go :—

“Where is *thy* feast, O Barmecide ?”

ESSAYS IN OLD FRENCH FORMS

THE BALLAD OF IMITATION

"C'est imiter quelqu'un que de planter des choux."

—ALFRED DE MUSSET.

IF they hint, O Musician, the piece that you
played
Is nought but a copy of Chopin or Spohr ;
That the ballad you sing is but merely "conveyed"
From the stock of the Arnes and the Purcells
of yore ;
That there's nothing, in short, in the words or
the score
That is not as out-worn as the "Wandering Jew" ;
Make answer—Beethoven could scarcely do
more—
That the man who plants cabbages imitates, too !

If they tell you, Sir Artist, your light and your
shade
Are simply "adapted" from other men's lore ;
That — plainly to speak of a "spade" as a
"spade"—
You've "stolen" your grouping from three or
from four ;
That (however the writer the truth may deplore),

THE BALLAD OF IMITATION

'Twas Gainsborough painted *your* "Little Boy
Blue";

Smile only serenely—though cut to the core—
For the man who plants cabbages imitates, too!

And you too, my Poet, be never dismayed
If they whisper your Epic — "Sir Éperon
d'Or"—

Is nothing but Tennyson thinly arrayed
In a tissue that's taken from Morris's store;
That no one, in fact, but a child could ignore
That you "lift" or "accommodate" all that
you do;

Take heart—though your Pegasus' withers be
sore—
For the man who plants cabbages imitates, too!

POSTSCRIPTUM.—And you, whom we all so adore,
Dear Critics, whose verdicts are always so
new!—

One word in your ear. There were Critics
before . . .

And the man who plants cabbages imitates, too!

ESSAYS IN OLD FRENCH FORMS

THE BALLAD OF PROSE AND RHYME

WHEN the ways are heavy with mire and
rut,
In November fogs, in December snows,
When the North Wind howls, and the doors are
shut,—
There is place and enough for the pains of
prose ;
But whenever a scent from the whitethorn
blows,
And the jasmine-stars at the casement climb,
And a Rosalind-face at the lattice shows,
Then hey !—for the ripple of laughing rhyme !

When the brain gets dry as an empty nut,
When the reason stands on its squarest toes,
When the mind (like a beard) has a “formal
cut,”—
There is place and enough for the pains of
prose ;
But whenever the May-blood stirs and glows,
And the young year draws to the “golden
prime,”
And Sir Romeo sticks in his ear a rose,—
Then hey !—for the ripple of laughing rhyme !

THE BALLAD OF PROSE AND RHYME

In a theme where the thoughts have a pedant-
strut,

In a changing quarrel of "Ayes" and "Noes,"
In a starched procession of "If" and "But,"—

There is place and enough for the pains of
prose ;

But whenever a soft glance softer grows
And the light hours dance to the trysting-time,

And the secret is told "that no one knows,"—
Then hey !—for the ripple of laughing rhyme !

ENVOY.

In the work-a-day world,—for its needs and woes,
There is place and enough for the pains of prose ;
But whenever the May-bells clash and chime,
Then hey !—for the ripple of laughing rhyme !

ESSAYS IN OLD FRENCH FORMS

“O NAVIS”

SHIP, to the roadstead rolled,
What dost thou?—O, once more
Regain the port. Behold!
Thy sides are bare of oar,
Thy tall mast wounded sore
Of Africus, and see,
What shall thy spars restore!—
Tempt not the tyrant sea!

What cable now will hold
When all drag out from shore!
What god canst thou, too bold,
In time of need implore!
Look! for thy sails flap o'er,
Thy stiff shrouds part and flee,
Fast—fast thy seams outpour,—
Tempt not the tyrant sea!

What though thy ribs of old
The pines of Pontus bore!
Not now to stern of gold
Men trust, or painted prore!
Thou, or thou count'st it store
A toy of winds to be,
Shun thou the Cyclads' roar,—
Tempt not the tyrant sea!

“O NAVIS”

ENVOY.

SHIP OF THE STATE, before
A care, and now to me
A hope in my heart's core,—
Tempt not the tyrant sea !

ESSAYS IN OLD FRENCH FORMS

THE DANCE OF DEATH

(AFTER HOLBEIN)

*“ Contra vim MORTIS
Non est medicamen in hortis.”*

HE is the despots' Despot. All must bide,
Later or soon, the message of his might ;
Princes and potentates their heads must hide,
Touched by the awful sigil of his right ;
Beside the Kaiser he at eve doth wait
And pours a potion in his cup of state ;
The stately Queen his bidding must obey ;
No keen-eyed Cardinal shall him affray ;
And to the Dame that wantoneth he saith—
“ Let be, Sweet-heart, to junket and to play.”
There is no King more terrible than Death.

The lusty Lord, rejoicing in his pride,
He draweth down ; before the armed Knight
With jingling bridle-rein he still doth ride ;
He crosseth the strong Captain in the fight ;
The Burgher grave he beckons from debate ;
He hales the Abbot by his shaven pate,
Nor for the Abbess' wailing will delay ;
No bawling Mendicant shall say him nay ;

THE DANCE OF DEATH

E'en to the pyx the Priest he followeth,
Nor can the Leech his chilling finger stay . .
There is no King more terrible than Death.

All things must bow to him. And woe betide
The Wine-bibber,—the Roisterer by night ;
Him the feast-master, many bouts defied,
Him 'twixt the pledging and the cup shall smite ;
Woe to the Lender at usurious rate,
The hard Rich Man, the hireling Advocate ;
Woe to the Judge that selleth Law for pay ;
Woe to the Thief that like a beast of prey
With creeping tread the traveller harryeth :—
These, in their sin, the sudden sword shall slay .
There is no King more terrible than Death.

He hath no pity,—nor will be denied.
When the low hearth is garnishèd and bright,
Grimly he flingeth the dim portal wide,
And steals the Infant in the Mother's sight ;
He hath no pity for the scorned of fate :—
He spares not Lazarus lying at the gate,
Nay, nor the Blind that stumbleth as he may ;
Nay, the tired Ploughman,—at the sinking ray,—
In the last furrow,—feels an icy breath,
And knows a hand hath turned the team astray . .
There is no King more terrible than Death.

He hath no pity. For the new-made Bride,
Blithe with the promise of her life's delight,
That wanders gladly by her Husband's side,
He with the clatter of his drum doth fright ;

ESSAYS IN OLD FRENCH FORMS

He scares the Virgin at the convent grate ;
The Maid half-won, the Lover passionate ;
He hath no grace for weakness and decay :
The tender Wife, the Widow bent and gray,
The feeble Sire whose footstep faltereth,—
All these he leadeth by the lonely way . .
There is no King more terrible than Death.

ENVOY.

YOUTH, for whose ear and monishing of late,
I sang of Prodigals and lost estate,
Have thou thy joy of living and be gay ;
But know not less that there must come a day,—
Aye, and perchance e'en now it hasteneth,—
When thine own heart shall speak to thee and
say,—
There is no King more terrible than Death.

*I*N after days when grasses high
O'er-top the stone where I shall lie,
Though ill or well the world adjust
My slender claim to honoured dust,
I shall not question or reply.

*I shall not see the morning sky ;
I shall not hear the night-wind sigh ;
I shall be mute, as all men must
In after days !*

*But yet, now living, fain were I
That some one then should testify,
Saying—" He held his pen in trust
To Art, not serving shame or lust."
Will none ?—Then let my memory die
In after days !*

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COLLECTED POEMS.—TITLE.

THIS volume is the outcome of half-a-dozen predecessors, the earliest of which was published by Messrs. Henry S. King & Co., in October, 1873. It was called *Vignettes in Rhyme and Vers de Société (now first collected)*, i.e. from different magazines; and it was dedicated to Anthony Trollope, the original Editor of *St. Paul's*, to which periodical many of the pieces had been contributed. It reached a second edition in 1874, and a third in 1875. In May, 1877, it was followed by *Proverbs in Porcelain and other Verses*, a fresh in-gathering, also issued by Messrs. King. A second edition of this appeared in 1878, the residue of which was destroyed by a fire. In 1880, *Vignettes in Rhyme and other Verses*, a selection for the most part from these two books, was published at New York by Messrs. Henry Holt & Co., with a Dedication to Oliver Wendell Holmes and an Introduction by Mr. Edmund Clarence Stedman. In 1883 (by which date the two English collections named above were no longer obtainable) this American selection of 1880, newly arranged, was reprinted in London by Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench & Co. (Messrs. King's successors) as *Old-World Idylls*; while in 1885 a second volume, entitled *At the Sign of the Lyre*, and mainly composed of later pieces, made its appearance both at London and New York. Besides these, and some illustrated selections, was issued in 1895 a two-volume edition of both (*Poems on Several Occasions*), comprising a portrait of the author by Mr. William Strang, and seven etchings by M. Adolphe Lalauze. Of this, however, which again contained

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some new pieces, there was but a limited English impression, now becoming exhausted ; and as *Old-World Idylls* and *At the Sign of the Lyre* will not be reprinted, it is hoped that the present single volume—which includes all they included, and a little more—may now take their place.

“*What God withholds no man can know.*”—PAGE 11.

“*Nescire velle quæ Magister optimus
Docere non vult, erudita inscitia est.*”—SCALIGER.

A GENTLEWOMAN OF THE OLD SCHOOL.—PAGE 14.

The Bachelor Samson Carrasco in *Don Quixote* had his doubts of Second Parts, and there is a like prejudice against Companion Pictures. *A Gentlewoman of the Old School* would probably have remained unwritten if an uninvited pendant to John Leisure (which originally came out in *St. Paul's* for July, 1870) had not made its appearance in *Chambers's Journal* for July 8, 1871.

“*Went out of town to Marybone.*”—PAGE 19.

“Many persons arrived in town from their country-houses in *Marybone*” (*Daily Journal*, Oct. 15, 1728).

“WALPOLE talked of ‘a man and his price.’”—PAGE 19.

This has been contradicted by the more literal historians. But it is sufficiently true for poetical purposes.

“*Ensign (of BRAGG's) made a terrible clangour.*”—PAGE 21.

Despite its suspicious appropriateness in this case, “Bragg's” regiment of Foot-Guards really existed, and was ordered to Flanders in April, 1742 (see *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1742, i. 217).

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“PORTO-BELLO at last was ta'en.”—PAGE 23.

Porto-Bello was taken in November, 1739. But Vice-Admiral Vernon's despatches did not reach England until the following March (see *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1740, i. 124, *et seq.*).

“In the fresh contours of his ‘Milkmaid's’ face.”—

PAGE 27.

See the *Enraged Musician*, an engraving of which was published in November of the following year (1741). To annotate this Ballad more fully would be easy; but the reader will perhaps take the details for granted. In answer to some inquiries, it may, however, be stated that there is no foundation in fact for the story.

“An Incident in the Life of François Boucher.”—

PAGE 34.

See *Boucher* by Arsène Houssaye, *Galerie du XVIII^e Siècle* (Cinquième Série; *Sculpteurs, Peintres, Musiciens*). The “incident” is, however, thus briefly referred to in Charles Blanc's *Histoire des Peintres de tous les Écoles*:—
 “Une fois cependant Boucher se laissa prendre à un amour simple et candide. Un jour, en passant dans la Rue Ste-Anne, il aperçut une jeune fruitière dont la beauté l'éblouit. C'était au temps des cerises. Le peintre la regarda et elle se laissa regarder sans songer à ses paniers. Ses lèvres parurent plus belles que ses cerises. Un amour naïf et tendre naquit de cette échange de regards; Boucher y trouva quelque jours de délices; Rosine y trouva la mort après une rapide bonheur.”

“The scene, a wood.”—PAGE 34.

The picture referred to is *Le Panier Mystérieux* by F. Boucher; engraved by R. Gaillard.

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“ ‘ *He thinks she thinks he thinks she sleeps,* ’ in fact.”—
PAGE 34.

This, as well as another reference (in *The Misogynist*) to the *Angel in the House*, led the author of that book at first, I am afraid, to doubt whether I was an entirely sympathetic reader of his works. But when, in the later years of COVENTRY PATMORE'S life, I had the advantage of his personal acquaintance, it was not difficult to convince him that he had no more devoted admirer than myself.

“ *And far afield were sun-baked savage creatures.* ”—
PAGE 35.

See *Les Caractères de LA BRUYÈRE, De l'homme*, 128.

“ *Whose greatest grace was jupes à la Camargo.* ”—
PAGE 36.

“ *C'était le beau temps où Camargo trouvait ses jupes trop longues pour danser la gargouillade.* ”—ARSÈNE HOUSSAYE.

“ *The grass he called 'too green.'* ”—PAGE 36.

“ *Il trouvait la nature trop verte et mal éclairée. Et son ami Lancret, le peintre des salons à la mode, lui répondait : 'Je suis de votre sentiment, la nature manque d'harmonie et de séduction.'* ”—CHARLES BLANC.

“ *Fresh as a fresh young pear-tree blossoming.* ”—PAGE 37.

“ *She was wel more blisful on to see
Than is the newe perjenete tree.* ”

—CHAUCER, *The Millere's Tale*.

PROVERBS IN PORCELAIN.—PAGE 45.

A pleasant memory connected with the appearance in 1873 of *Vignettes in Rhyme* is that the little book procured me

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the friendship of the author of *London Lyrics*. My second volume of verse, with the title prefixed to this note, was dedicated to him in words which—as they have not been recently reprinted—may be here preserved :—

“TO FREDERICK LOCKER.

Is it to kindest Friend I send
This nosegay gathered new?
Or is it more to Critic sure,—
To Singer clear and true?
I know not which, indeed, nor need;
All Three I found—in You.”

“*Nay,—’twas a song of SAINTE-AULAIRE.*”—PAGE 50.

It is but just to the octogenarian Marquis, whom the Duchess of Maine surnamed her “*vieux berger*,” to say that he is guiltless of the song here ascribed to him. For it, and for the similar pieces in these *Proverbs*, I am alone responsible. In the *Secrets of the Heart*, however, I have, without attempting to revive the persons, borrowed the names of the charming heroines of *À quoi rêvent les Jeunes Filles*.

“*Sing me of Her, whose name may not be told.*”—PAGE 84.

“Dicat Opuntiæ
Frater Megillæ, quo beatus
Vulnere, qua pereat sagitta.”—HOR. i. 27.

How this stanza originally stood escapes me; but—as I well remember—it owes its final turn to the late ANTHONY TROLLOPE,—kindest and most capable of Editors,—who referred me to the foregoing quotation.

“*I am a Shade: a Shadowe too arte thou.*”—PAGE 140.

A motto in this spirit occurs at Stirling.

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THE CHILD-MUSICIAN.—PAGE 146.

These verses originated in an "American story" told me orally by a friend who had found it copied into some English paper. I "romanced" it after my own fashion. After it was published, by the courtesy of one of the most graceful and finished of Trans-Atlantic poets, I was furnished with a more accurate version of the facts. Those who wish to read the true and authentic story of poor little James Speaight must do so in the pathetic prose setting of Mr. THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH.

THE CRADLE.—PAGE 147.

The leading idea of these lines is taken from a French Sonnet,—*Le Berceau*, by Eugène Manuel.

"Some moneyed mourner's love or pride."—PAGE 150.

"Thus much alone we know—Metella died,
The wealthiest Roman's wife: Behold his love or pride!"
—*Childe Harold*, iv. 103.

"Huddling they came, with shag sides caked of
mire."—PAGE 170.

See the picture of *Circe* by Mr. BRITON RIVIERE, R.A.

"A bolder rider than Bellerophon."—PAGE 175.

'Eques ipso melior Bellerophonte.'—HOR. iii. 12.

"The Thefts of Mercury."—PAGE 175.

"Te, boves olim nisi reddidisses
Per dolum amotas, puerum minaci
Voce dum terret, viduus pharetra
Risit Apollo."—HOR. i. 10.

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“*Have I not writ thy Laws?*”—PAGE 191.

The lines in *italic* type which follow, are freely paraphrased from the ancient *Code d'Amour* of the XIIth Century, as given by André le Chapelain himself.

“*To brandish the poles of that old Sedan chair!*”—

PAGE 213.

A friendly but anonymous critic, whose versatile pen it is, nevertheless, not easy to mistake, recalls, *à-propos* of the above, the following passage from Molière, which shows that Chairmen are much the same all the world over:—

1. Porteur (prenant un des bâtons de sa chaise). *Çà, payez-nous vite!*

Mascarille. *Quoi?*

1. Porteur. *Je dis que je veux avoir de l'argent tout à l'heure.*

Mascarille. *Il est raisonnable, celui-là, &c.*

—*Les Précieuses Ridicules*, Sc. vii.

“*It has waited by portals where Garrick has played.*”—PAGE 213.

According to Mrs. Elizabeth Carter (Smith's *Nollekens*, 1828, i. 211), when Garrick acted, the hackney-chairs often stood “all round the Piazzas [Covent Garden], down Southampton-street, and extended more than half-way along Maiden-lane.”

“*A skill PRÉVILLE could not disown.*”—PAGE 228.

Préville was the French Foote *circa* 1760. His gifts as a comedian were of the highest order; and he had an extraordinary faculty for entering completely into the parts he played. Sterne, in a letter to Garrick from Paris, in January, 1762, calls him “Mercury himself.”

NOTES

MOLLY TREFUSIS.—PAGE 235.

The epigram here quoted from an "old magazine" is to be found in Lord Neaves's admirable little volume, *The Greek Anthology* (*Blackwood's Ancient Classics for English Readers*). Those familiar with eighteenth-century literature will recognize in the succeeding verses but another echo of those lively stanzas of John Gay to "Molly Mog" of the Rose Inn at Wokingham, which found so many imitators in their own day. Whether my heroine is to be identified with a certain "Miss Trefusis," whose *Poems* are sometimes to be met with in the second-hand booksellers' catalogues, I know not. But if she is, I trust I have done her accomplished shade no wrong.

AN EASTERN APOLOGUE.—PAGE 245.

The initials "E. H. P." are those of the eminent (and ill-fated) Orientalist, Professor PALMER. As my lines entirely owed their origin to his translations from Zoheir, I sent them to him. He was indulgent enough to praise them warmly. It is true he found anachronisms; but as he said that these would cause no serious disturbance to orthodox Persians, I concluded I had succeeded in my little *pastiche*, and, with his permission, inscribed it to him. I wish now that it had been a more worthy tribute to one of the most erudite and versatile scholars this age has seen.

A REVOLUTIONARY RELIC.—PAGE 249.

"373. ST. PIERRE (Bernardin de), *Paul et Virginie*, 12mo, old calf. Paris, 1787. This copy is pierced throughout by a bullet-hole, and bears on one of the covers, the words: 'à Lucile St. A. . . chez M. Batemans, à Edmonds-Bury, en Angleterre,' very faintly written in pencil." (Extract from Catalogue.)

NOTES

“*Did she wander like that other?*”—PAGE 251.

Lucile Desmoulins. See Carlyle's *French Revolution*, Vol. iii. Book vi. Chap. ii.

“*And its tender rain shall lave it.*”—PAGE 252.

It is by no means uncommon for an editor to interrupt some of these revolutionary letters by a “Here there are traces of tears.”

A ROMAN ROUND-ROBIN.—PAGE 265.

This piece of flippancy first appeared in the *Spectator* for 13th November, 1875, and was pleasantly rallied in a later number by the present Laureate, Mr. ALFRED AUSTIN.

TO A CHILD.—PAGE 277.

These lines were written for the *Garland of Rachel* (an English imitation of the famous *Guirlande de Julie*), which was issued in 1881 from the private press of Mr. H. DANIEL of Oxford.

“*By ‘Bysshe’ his epithet.*”—PAGE 280.

i.e. *The Art of English Poetry*, by Edward Bysshe, 1702.

THE BOOK-PLATE'S PETITION.—PAGE 287.

These lines were reprinted from *Notes and Queries* in Mr. ANDREW LANG'S instructive volume *The Library*, 1881, where the curious will find full information as to the enormities of the book-mutilators.

NOTES

A DIALOGUE, ETC.—PAGE 301.

This dialogue, first printed in *Scribner's Magazine* for May, 1888, was afterwards read by Professor HENRY MORLEY at the opening of the Pope Loan Museum at Twickenham (July 31st), to the Catalogue of which exhibition it was prefixed.

"*The 'crooked Body with a crooked Mind.'*"—PAGE 302.

"Mens curva in corpore curvo."

Said of Pope by Lord Orrery.

"*Neither as LOCKE was, nor as BLAKE.*"—PAGE 309.

The Shire Hall at Taunton, where, on September 4, 1883, these verses were read at the unveiling, by JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, of Miss MARGARET THOMAS's bust of Fielding, also contains busts of Admiral Blake and John Locke.

"*The Journal of his middle-age.*"—PAGE 311.

It is, perhaps, needless to say that the reference here is to the *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*, published posthumously in February, 1755,—a record which for its intrinsic pathos and dignity may be compared with the letter and dedication which Fielding's predecessor and model, Cervantes, prefixed to his last romance of *Persiles and Sigismunda*.

A POSTSCRIPT TO "RETALIATION."—PAGE 313.

On the 22nd June, 1896, these verses were read for the author by the Master of the Temple (Canon AINGER) at the dinner given in celebration of the five hundredth meeting of the Johnson Society of Pembroke College, Oxford. They then concluded with a couplet appropriate to that occasion. In their present place, it has been thought preferable to leave them—like Goldsmith's epitaph on Reynolds—unfinished.

NOTES

“ *When his pistol miss'd fire, he would use the
• butt-end.*”—PAGE 314.

“ He [Johnson] had recourse to the device which Goldsmith imputed to him in the witty words of one of Cibber's comedies: ‘ There is no arguing with Johnson ; for when his pistol misses fire, he knocks you down with the butt end of it.’ ” (Hill's *Boswell*, 1887, ii. 100.)

“ *You found he had nought of the bear but the
skin.*”—PAGE 314.

“ Let me impress upon my readers a just and happy saying of my friend Goldsmith, who knew him [Johnson] well : ‘ Johnson, to be sure, has a roughness in his manner ; but no man alive has a more tender heart. *He has nothing of the bear but his skin.*’ ” (Hill's *Boswell*, 1887, ii. 66.)

“ *That he made little fishes talk vastly like
whales.*”—PAGE 314.

“ If you were to make little fishes talk, they would talk like WHALES.” (Goldsmith to Johnson, Hill's *Boswell*, 1887, ii. 231.)

“ *But read him for Style,—and dismiss from your thoughts,
The crowd of compilers who copied his faults.*”—PAGE 314.

These, or like rhymes, are to be found in *Edwin and Angelina*, and—for the matter of that—in *Retaliation* itself:—

“ Say, where has our poet this malady caught?
Or, wherefore his characters thus without fault?”

But the practice is not confined to Goldsmith: it is also followed by Pope and Prior.

NOTES

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.—PAGE 316.

These verses appeared in the *Athenæum* for April 1, 1882.

CHARLES GEORGE GORDON.—PAGE 317.

These verses appeared in the *Saturday Review* for February 14, 1885.

VICTOR HUGO.—PAGE 318.

These verses appeared in the *Athenæum* for August 8, 1885.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON.—PAGE 319.

These verses appeared in the *Athenæum* for October 8, 1892.

“*With that he made a Leg.*”—PAGE 331.

“JOVE made his Leg and kiss’d the Dame,
Obsequious HERMES did the same.”

—PRIOR.

“*So took his Virtù off to COCK’S.*”—PAGE 331.

Cock, the auctioneer of Covent Garden, was the Christie and Manson of the last century. The leading idea of this fable, it should be added, is taken from one by Gellert.

“*Of Van’s ‘Goose-Pie.’*”—PAGE 333.

“At length they in the Rubbish spy
A Thing resembling a Goose Py.”

—SWIFT’S verses on *Vanbrugh’s House*, 1706.

“*The Oaf preferred the ‘Tongs and Bones.’*”—PAGE 337.

“I have a reasonable good ear in music: let us have the tongs and the bones.”

—*Midsummer-Night’s Dream*, Act iv. Sc. i.

NOTES.

"*And sigh'd o'er Chaos wine for Stingo.*"—PAGE 338.

Squire Homes~~man~~ probably meant Cahors.

THE WATER-CURE.—PAGE 367.

These verses were suggested by the recollection of an anecdote in Madame de Genlis, which seemed to lend itself to eighteenth-century treatment. It was therefore somewhat depressing, not long after they were written, to find that the subject had already been annexed in the *Tatler* by an actual eighteenth-century writer, Swift's "little Harrison," who, moreover, claimed to have founded his story on a contemporary incident. Burton, nevertheless, had told it before him, as early as 1621, in the *Anatomy of Melancholy*.

"*In Babylonian numbers hidden.*"—PAGE 369.

"— nec Babylonios
Tentaris numeros."

—HOR. i. 11.

A CITY FLOWER.—PAGE 381.

These verses—as far as I can remember—were my first contribution to a magazine. They appeared in *Temple Bar* for December, 1864, being welcomed with extreme cordiality by the editor, EDMUND YATES.

OF HIS MISTRESS.—PAGE 427.

This translation was made at the request of Professor SAINTSBURY, who included it in his study of the author of the *Mémoires de Grammont* (*Essays on French Novelists*, Percival, 1891).

NOTES

TO ONE WHO BIDS ME SING.—PAGE 438.

This piece was written in response to a graceful exposulatory villanelle which appeared in *Temple Bar* for February, 1895, and was signed "Cecil Harley."

"*All grinning as one in a gust of good nature.*"—PAGE 446.

See Hogarth's *Pleased Audience at a Play*, 1733.

"*And spite of the mourning that most of us wear.*"—PAGE 447.

In March, 1773, when *She Stoops to Conquer* was first played, there was a court-mourning for the King of Sardinia (Forster's *Goldsmith*, Book iv. Chap. 15).

"*But he grows every day more and more like the print.*"—PAGE 447.

"Mr. *Wilkes*, with his usual good humour, has been heard to observe, that he is every day growing more and more like his portrait by *Hogarth* [i.e. the print of May 16, 1763]."

—*Biographical Anecdotes of William Hogarth*, 1782, pp. 305-6.

"*The furious troops in battle join'd.*"—PAGE 454.

The quotation is from Addison's *Campaign*.

"*They are a school to win.*"—PAGE 459

In view of the very prolonged popularity which has attended the use of these old French forms in England and America, the following dates may here be preserved. Some of the *Triolets* at p. 461 appeared in the *Graphic* for May 23, 1874; the *Rondeau* at p. 466 and the *Ballade* at p. 486 in *Evening*

NOTES

Hours for May, 1876; the *Villanelle* at p. 482 in *Proverbs in Porcelain*, May, 1877; the *Chant Royal* at p. 504 in the *Architect* for July 14, 1877; and the *Ballade à double refrain* at p. 500 in *Belgravia* for January, 1878.

“PERSICOS ODI.”—PAGE 463.

The subjoined “Pocket Version” was appended to this, when it first appeared in the *second* edition of *Proverbs in Porcelain*, 1878:—

“Davus, I detest
Persian decoration;
Roses and the rest,
Davus, I detest.
Simple myrtle best
Suits *our* modest station;—
Davus, I detest
Persian decoration.”

Monsieur Isaac de Benserade, in the Hotel de Rambouillet, days, translated the entire *Metamorphoses* of Ovid into Rondeaux. In this, and some similar pieces that follow (*cf.* pp. 465, 479-481, 485, 502), I have imitated his temerity but not his excess.

“ON LONDON STONES.”—PAGE 466.

Lope de Vega and Hurtado de Mendoza wrote sonnets on Sonnet-making; Voiture imitated them as regards the Rondeau. Here is a paraphrase of Voiture:—

You bid me try, BLUE-EYES, to write
A Rondeau. What!—forthwith?—to-night?
Reflect. Some skill I have, 'tis true;—
But thirteen lines!—and rhymed on two!
“Refrain,” as well. Ah, hapless plight!

NOTES

Still, there are five lines,—ranged aright.
 These Gallic bonds, I feared, would fright
 My easy Muse. They did, till you—
 You bid me try !

That makes them eight. The port's in sight ;—
 'Tis all because your eyes are bright !
 Now just a pair to end in "oo"—
 When maids command, what can't we do !
 Behold !—the RONDEAU, tasteful, light,
 You bid me try !

"MORE POETS YET."—PAGE 468.

The dedicatory initials of this rondeau stand for "John Leicester Warren" (afterwards Lord DE TABLEY). He was kind enough to read the proofs of the volume in which it appeared ; and I remember that, years after, at one of our rare meetings, he pleasantly—and with perfect accuracy—recalled the fact that the Homeric epithet "many-buttoned," applied to the page in *A Nightingale in Kensington Gardens*, had been suggested by himself. This suggestion by no means exhausts my debt to his fine scholarship and fastidious taste. When, some months before his death in 1895, he sent me his last book, I returned him a few verses of acknowledgment. As they pleased him—and as, moreover, Mr. EDMUND GOSSE has been good enough to give them the currency of his delightful *Critical Kit-Cats*—I may perhaps be pardoned if I reproduce them here :—

" Still may the Muses foster thee, O Friend,
 Who, while the vacant quidnuncs stand at gaze,
 Wond'ring what Prophet next the Fates may send,
 Still tread'st the ancient ways ;

NOTES

Still climb'st the clear-cold altitudes of Song,
Or ling'ring "by the shore of old Romance,"
Heed'st not the vogue, how little or how long,
Of marvels made in France.

Still to the summits may thy face be set,
And long may we, that heard thy morning rhyme
Hang on thy noon-day music, nor forget
In the hushed even-time !"

THE END

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